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MESSAGES.

His charity was love, and love
So strong that 'twas above
Death's strength and all defection.

Price Paper 25¢ cloth 50¢

MESSAGES OF TRUTH

In Rhyme and Story.

BY

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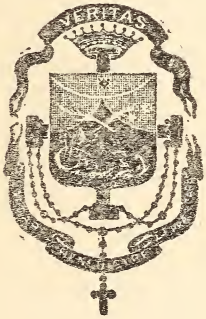

PHILADELPHIA
JOHN JOSEPH McVEY
1911

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Nihil Obstat:

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Imprimatur:

FRATER M. L. HEAGAN, O.P., S.T.L.,
Prior Provincialis.

Imprimatur:

✠ E. F. PRENDERGAST,
Adm. Philadelphiensis.

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"*Melius est in via claudicare quam præter viam fortiter ambulare.*"—S. Aug. Serm. CXLI.

It is better to go along the right path limping, than to walk straight and bravely on one that leads astray.

St. Augustine.

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PREFACE.

These Messages have been inspired by an ardent love of Truth, and it is a knowledge of Truth they are intended to convey. In their new and improved garb they are designed not so much to entertain, as to enlighten and inflame. "I am come to cast fire on the earth," said He who is Truth and Life itself; "what will I, then, but that it be kindled?[1] If one spark of that fire yet scintillates in these cold pages, may it be fanned to a white heat by the reader's reflection, and end, with God's help, by consuming the stubble and the tares so frequently mixed with the wood, silver, and gold of man's moral and religious prosperity.

It is through the courtesy of "The Rosary Magazine" and "The Young Eagle" that the "Messages of Truth in Rhyme and Story" are now grouped together and, with important additions, are sent on their missionary errand.

[1] Luke xii, 49.

CHARITY.

I.

The pessimist, the optimist,
The selfish man, the altruist,
The critic small, th' indulgent man,—
  That dear and precious rarity!—
Did meet one day beside the sea,
A-wand'ring meditatively,
A peaceful youth of comely mien
  Endowed with holy charity.

II.

"Whence comest thou," the first began,
"To stray along the glaring strand?
From heav'n? If so, 'tis wondrous
      strange.
A better land were erst thy range.
Perchance, art from the nether world,
By some capricious spirit hurled
To earth again, in angel's form,
More honest men to tempt and scorn?

III.

"But no! Thou'rt still of flesh and bone,
The fruit of dust and clay, and one
Who, I perceive, art like the sea
That flows, then ebbs, inconstantly.
Oh, would that thou wert more robust,
More virile, valiant, stern, and just!"
The youth said nothing,—only smiled.
He loved the cross, it made him mild.

IV.

Then spake the optimist in tone
More cheering. "Fain," said he, "I own
That fairer youth than thee to see
Were pleasure ne'er accorded me.
Pray, then, breathe forth thy dulcet voice
My ears to charm, my soul rejoice.
Too modest art thou for thy gifts!
Diffuse the good that so uplifts."

V.

The youth was silent still, and paused—
"What have I, Lord, thou hast not caused
And giv'n to me to use and guard?"
His soul in these communed with God,
While outwardly, his features beamed
With sweetness, and a heav'nly sheen
Transfigured them beyond compare:
God's spirit pure was breathing there.

VI.

Then sudden thought his speech did start:
"Kind Sir," he ventured, "bless thy heart!
No coldness can in thee have part.
I would not wound thee, for my art
Is one more gentle, one more wise,
The first-begotten of the skies.
I would not have it otherwise,
For God my soul would then despise."

VII.

"Queen charity hath taught me love
Like that which angels have above,
For thee and thine and all who strive
By kindly words and deeds to drive
Affection home to hearts of men—
To draw them, rather, to the ken
Of godlike things and saintliness
By practicing sweet gentleness."

VIII.

Then did the selfish man exclaim:
"Let's on! Such compliments are vain.
The youth to us a stranger is,
What know we, then, of him or his?

Sir Pessimist may be as right
As blander Optimist, whose sight
Is always magnifying things,
Whose pivot-tongue forever swings."

IX.

Those were his words which, half-suppressed,
Were most devoid of tenderness.
Impatience marked his features coarse.
His eyes were turned aside, to force,
If might be, from the comely youth,
A straight dismissal which, forsooth,
Would make his five companions see
There's nothing sound in vanity.

X.

E'en now the youth was undisturbed.
His eye had seen, his ear had heard,
But 'twas not he had asked to stay
The friends he met along the way.
Another might be gratified
To utter kindlier words. He sighed
A prayer within his breast, unheard:
"Dear Lord, enlarge a heart so shirred."

XI.

The altruist in turn eschewed
All bitterness and crabbed mood.

"Brave youth," quoth he, "thou art most
blest
Thy tongue and heart to hold at rest
While gossip surges round thee wild,
Indeed, art thou of Truth the child.
Could I but be as thou, my soul
Would feel as though 'twere near its goal."

XII.

"Forsooth!" the critic volunteered,
"Forsooth! *If* you were he," he sneered,
"And we were you, and all men we,"
He thus went on triumphantly,
"Your soul would then be at its goal,
And so would ours, and so, the soul
Of ev'ry man who lives and breathes,
But, oh! that '*if*'—how vain it is!"

XIII.

He laughed,—but 'twas not heartily,
'Twas superficial, and the glee
He sought to show was not the kind
To satisfy a noble mind.
His mind was small, and so he ceased.
Th' indulgent man, therefore, increased
His zeal for righteousness and broke
His list'ning silence. Thus he spoke:

XIV.

"Kind friends, it grieves me sore to hear
From lips familiar words that sear
The heart like these.
Why not with one another bear?
Why not the harmless youth declare
Like Him who came our souls to spare
Until he sees
That we, through sympathy for him,
And love for all that is not sin
Are broad enough good grace to win
From God *and man?*
The youth has shown his gentleness
To be well nigh pure godliness,—
Bless'd be he then!"

XV.

In tears the meditative one
Did soar aloft before God's throne.
The angels, joying, hovered round,
The saints were hushed by music's sound:
"What goodness, Savior, hast thou placed
Within this servant's firm embrace!
Fast wedded, then, to it and thee
Mayst thou him keep eternally."

XVI.

Ashamed, abashed, the thoughtless men
Beheld the tears that preached to them,

But heard no voice. They had not meant
Affections tender, deep, and bent
On loving all,—the good, the bad,
The cheerful, melancholy, sad,—
To bruise in such a heartless way.
They but forget their words to weigh.

XVII.

And this the quiet youth perceived,
Nor harbored he ill-will, nor grieved.
'Twas God arranged the interview,
What was there left for him to do?
His sins had called for more than this.
To think aught else were proud, amiss,
Would make him like who falls and slips,
Yet one last word escaped his lips.

XVIII.

"Kind Sirs, methinks the Wise Man said,
In praising Wisdom,—you have read,—
That Wisdom takes the place of age
In forming well the perfect sage.[1]
Gray hairs are not what Wisdom is
Except when Wisdom makes them his.
Then Wisdom doth to them impart
A meaning deep, a noble art."

[1] "Venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is grey hairs. And a spotless life is old age." Wisdom, IV, 8, 9.

XIX.

"Now Christ has taught that charity
Is highest wisdom, and to be
  Like Christ is man's perfection.
Christ was not gray, but Christ was wise,
His charity bloomed in the skies
  And showed itself in action."

XX.

" 'Twas not pent up within his mind,
'Twas not explained, nor hard to find,
  It needed no reflection.
His charity was love, and love
So strong that 'twas above
  Death's strength and all defection."

XXI.

The men passed on, the youth remained.
A short "farewell," the word unfeigned,
Did symbolize the peace that reigned
  Among those hearts, now blended.
The youth was left alone once more,
Again he walked along the shore,
In contemplation evermore
  Desiring to be ended.

XXII.

The wavelets played more merrily,
The sunbeams danced more cheerily,
The wafting breeze refreshingly
  Did kiss his brow sweet-scented.
God's angel watched him lovingly,
God's mother smiled on him, for he
From creatures was of all most free
  And had the world transcended.

BECAUSE I LOVE HIM.

AN APOLOGETIC STORY, FOUNDED ON FACT.

Lorenzo was an Italian dentist. His first excursion to America had hardly enriched his mind with favorable impressions concerning the Land of Liberty and its people. He had admired the skyscrapers that overlooked the harbor at New York, marveled at the miles of piering along the East River, and was rather dazed at the ceaseless traffic in the streets of Gotham, in the air, and on the waters roundabout. The suspension bridges had astonished him, and the army of active street cleaners, clad in garbs of white, seemed to indicate that the American sanitary system was fast reaching perfection.

But there were a great many things that he disliked. Every one was so preoccupied with personal affairs that he seemed to scorn the convenience of the stranger. Of course, he excepted hotels, theatres, pullman cars and the like, where the traveler paid his way. In other places and circumstances he had often

been embarrassed, shoved aside, laughed and jeered at by the boys. Policemen to whom he had applied for information had been gruff and disrespectful.

Such offensive treatment had hardly been deserved by the gentlemanly Lorenzo. He took a manifest pride in having virtues quite contrary to those that flourished in the New World. He would frequently leave his dental chambers in Italy to aid itinerant strangers. He even deemed that aesthetic tastes rendered such acts of kindness imperative. But then, there is nothing aesthetic, nothing beautiful in America. Everything that is original there is useful, but not beautiful. He wondered that the statue of Liberty were not rather called Utility, for even liberty in America is servant to selfish utility and is for that reason aggressive. He himself had often suffered from its aggressiveness.

But Lorenzo, although serious in all that he said, was only feeling his way. He had secrets to talk about and he wished to speak of them "to a clergyman," such as he recognized in Father Tinniens, his chance fellow passenger aboard an Eastern bound Atlantic liner.

"My family," he said to Father Tin-

niens, " are all Catholic and I used to be, but I am no longer so at heart. My wife and children are ignorant of this and I intend to leave them in that ignorance. It would be cruel to disabuse them of it. It seems to me that they are deceived in their religious convictions, but they reap so much consolation from them that I am not going to deprive them of it." The dentist added that he would fain share in the comforts of religion himself, but his mind was too well instructed to hold longer to the doctrines that fathered them.

" Then you are not a Christian, Mr. Lorenzo? " ventured Father Tinniens.

" O yes," he replied, " I am a Christian. I believe that Christ lived on earth, that He was an honest, upright man, a type of all virtue, and I cannot shut my eyes to the good He accomplished. The only thing I do not believe about Him, is that He is God."

At this point the call for dinner interrupted the confidential talk. The new acquaintances agreed to meet again.

II.

Among the many friends of Lorenzo was a Spanish Doctor of Medicine, a graduate

of Pennsylvania University. At a distance, he seemed to be running over with sparkling wit and humor, but "all is not gold that glitters." The physician learned from Lorenzo at dinner, that the little group of ecclesiastics with whom Father Tinniens was traveling, was not so unapproachable as he had imagined. That afternoon he began to profit by the intelligence. Coming upon them unexpectedly, he surprised them with the exclamation: "What a fine pillow to sleep on!"

He was in his shirtsleeves and he held at arm's length a finely-bound book of about the same dimensions as a small Douay Bible. He looked drowsy and had apparently been taking a nap on the gilt-edged volume.

"What pillow is that?" asked one of the students.

"Shakespeare," he replied. "Every one tells me to read Shakespeare in order to learn English, but Shakespeare is teaching me that English is one of the sleepiest of languages. Shakespeare would make a good drug."

"Is that so? What part of Shakespeare are you reading?"

"'The Comedy of Errors,' and the big-

gest error of all is that I began it and the next biggest is that I stuck to it till I finished it."

"But that was hardly an error," said another of the students.

"That depends on how you look at it," retorted the physician humorously, and, with a stout stretch of the arms, a yawn, and an aimless glance over the glistening waves, he stalked away as abruptly as he had come.

III.

The moment drew nigh for Father Tinniens to treat with Lorenzo. He found the dentist taking a nap on the canvas-cover of one of the life-boats. At his approach, the latter awoke and, assuming a sitting posture, let his fashionably shod feet swing gently in the breeze, about on a level with Father Tinniens' nostrils. The Doctor did not mind that, neither did Father Tinniens. Yet, if the two had exchanged places, Lorenzo might have regarded his companion as another specimen of American rudeness.

A few remarks were ventured about the pleasant voyage so rapidly nearing its end. Then Lorenzo observed: "I believe the

Catholic Church is in a flourishing condition in your country?''

'' Yes,'' answered Father Tinniens, '' it is spreading gradually and meets with little resistance.''

'' But is it as exclusive in the United States as elsewhere?''

'' That depends upon what you mean by exclusiveness, sir. The Catholic Church is essentially a liberal body seeking to be all to all, with a view to gaining all, Gentile as well as Jew.''

'' Yes, but then it makes the acceptance of its doctrines an obligation, and that is a relic of Judaism. No one can be saved unless he is a Roman Catholic—as if that were a teaching of Christ.''

'' And such, with your leave, I beg to maintain it is, sir, though you must not judge the idea too severely. The Catholic Church is that founded by Christ and preached by the Apostles whom He made His immediate representatives. 'He who hears you,' He said, 'hears me, and he who despises you despises me.' The Apostles and Christ are one. Of course, that does not mean that every one who lives and dies in any other religious persuasion is lost. There may be certain

individuals who never suspect that they are astray, and Christ is too merciful to censure such on the score of having despised Him. Indeed, they might be seeking Him with all their hearts, and thereupon they become members of the soul of the Church."

"The soul of the Church! Ah! I like that expression. It is liberal. It is so much like what Christ said of His true followers, that they were to worship 'in spirit and in truth,' and that is the word that has convinced me that religious professions are more or less a humbug. It is the spirit that enlivens. The letter kills."

"Assuredly, Doctor, no one can find fault with you so long as you quote the doctrine of Christ and St. Paul in their own words, but I wonder if it would astonish you to learn that you misconstrue their meaning?"

"Misconstrue?" Lorenzo was amused at the expression. "That were impossible. Their words are too clear."

"Clear indeed they are, Doctor, but you are aware that isolated phrases are often misleading unless account is taken of the circumstances that gave them birth. For instance, a rebuke might be turned into an

encomium by leaving out a few negatives and disregarding its cause."

"That may be, but I am not manipulating phraseology now. I am speaking straightforwardly what I believe to be true."

"And I give you the credit for so doing, Sir, but let me ask you to think a moment over what you have said. You have branded religious profession a humbug, because, in your way of looking at it, an upright spirit is all that is needed."

"Precisely, my reverend friend."

"But do you really think that is what Christ and St. Paul taught?"

"Certainly, only those great teachers put it in other words."

"But let us see," said Father Tinniens, "I never thought before that Christ had thrown to the winds the laws of love and piety taught by His heavenly Father."

"There you are with that Romish notion that Christ is the Son of God. You can never convince me on that score, my friend. That is one of the most ludicrous tenets of Christianity. I call it Romish because all who hold it are either followers of the Pope or have caught the fever from them."

"Well, then, let that go for the moment," urged Father Tinniens. "If Christ were not the Son of God, then He was a mere man, and anything He would teach contrary to the divine commandments would be null."

"I suppose it would," replied Lorenzo with a suppressed smile on his lips, such as would be prompted by the thought that Father Tinniens was something of a pedant, "but what then? You know I don't believe that half the precepts contained in the Bible are divine. Indeed, I think the Bible itself would be much improved if it were expurgated."

"Well, let that, too, go for the present," persisted Father Tinniens. "You believe that there is a God, do you not?"

"I would be foolish to doubt that," answered the Doctor. "I can never think of the beauties and the vastness of creation without admiring the great First Cause that gave them being."

"Very well, sir. Now you must admit that if it is God Who has given us all we have, we must love Him in the degree in which He has done us good."

"But do you think the Omnipotent God would put us under precept to do that?

He has no need of us. His own goodness and majesty suffice Him."

"What you say is true, Doctor. God has no need of us, but we have much need of Him, and if we do not worship Him as a Lord, we must at least love Him as a Benefactor."

"I trust you do not misunderstand me," uttered Lorenzo. "I firmly believe that we should love God in a befitting way."

"But is not God the author of our bodies as well as our souls? Has He not given us our all?"

"Of course, and therefore we should recognize His goodness as Christ said, 'in spirit and in truth.'"

"You are right, Doctor, but I dare say you put a wrong sense to those words. If God has given us our all, we must love Him accordingly, with our all, with our whole being. That is the only befitting way to thank Him, and that is what He has commanded us to do. That is also what Christ and St. Paul bade us to do, as you must remember, if you have read the Bible carefully."

Lorenzo remembered well enough for, on his own avowal, he read the Bible with as much interest as his books on dentistry,

notwithstanding his belief that certain parts of the Holy Book needed to be expurgated. He was rather surprised, however, at observing that the two doctrines were in conflict, so in a half-reluctant tone, he asked Father Tinniens how he understood the worship of the spirit.

"Well, sir," began the priest, "the words you refer to were spoken to the woman of Samaria and were directed against the bare outward ceremonies that were enacted at that time at Jerusalem, and on Mt. Gerizim where the Samaritans worshiped. Those ceremonies had been instituted to bring hearts nearer to God, but the minds of the age strove constantly about the letter of the Law, forgetting entirely its inward spirit. You remember that Christ openly denounced these growing evils more than once. They tended to make men too much like whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones. That is why Christ insisted, not on the suppression of exterior religion, but on the necessity of making the spirit pervade all religious action. He was only borrowing a figure from what we observe in daily life. A body without a soul is dead, and so, unmixed outward religion is dead. The soul

is the life-giver, but at the same time it must have a body in which to act. Christ insisted emphatically on the spiritual part in worthy action, because that was most lamentably wanting in His time. On other occasions He spoke of the outer or bodily part."

"You remember the 'city on the mountain' that could not be hid, the lighted candle that would foolishly be put under a bushel, the burning lamps that His followers were to hold in their hands, that men might see their good works and glorify their 'Father Who is in heaven.' All these show that if Christ spoke only of the spiritual side of our obligations towards God to the woman of Samaria, it was far from His mind to confine the acquittal of those obligations solely to the spirit. The spirit may go astray while the outward man performs the works of righteousness, but if the spirit be right, all else will be correct. Such was Christ's meaning and such was the meaning of St. Paul, and they showed by their lives the signification of their words. They both adored the Father 'in spirit and in truth.' They both observed the letter, and Christ even recommended the letter when it was possible to observe

it. ' The Pharisees,' He said, ' have sat in the chair of Moses. According to their words, do ye, but according to their works, do ye not.' "

Lorenzo felt disposed to interrupt this piece of sermonizing from time to time, but Father Tinniens took no notice of his apparent uneasiness, for each interruption would have meant a digression. At length the Doctor grew more and more serious, pensive even, and after Father Tinniens had ended his little talk, he said:

" Well, I never thought of that before. If I could see everything in religion that way, I think I would become an out-and-out Christian, but I know it is impossible."

"Do not be too sure," Father Tinniens warned him. "As long as you have doubts look for the truth and prepare yourself to accept it whencesoever it may come. If you do all that is in your power to find the truth, God will enlighten you, for although He has no need of you nor any of us, He is full of mercy and tender compassion. He will hearken to our petitions as to those of dear children."

" That is what I have always wanted to believe," said Lorenzo, as he got down from the boat, " but God is too far above

us, He seems almost unreachable. However, good-bye for the present. I thank you and I hope we shall meet again."

At this the doubting man walked away, and Father Tinniens began to wonder if his heart were really changed.

IV.

That evening there was a dance on the upper deck. It had been arranged by the Captain as a final reunion, for on the morrow many of the passengers were to disembark at Gibraltar. The outer side of the broad deck had been enclosed with colored bunting, and the floor, always clean and white, had been waxed. The flags of many nations were displayed along either side while Japanese lanterns were suspended in odd designs overhead. The orchestra was in position and was inviting the dancers by playing national airs, interrupting them now and then with an enticing waltz or schottische. Couple after couple appeared and finally to the apparent satisfaction of all, Lorenzo came. He was attired in evening dress and led by the arm, not a companion of the fairer sex, but a young man whose raiment ignored the mode, and who was traveling second-class.

Father Tinniens was secretly observing the event through an opening in the bunting. He grew curious as he perceived Lorenzo introducing the young man to numerous acquaintances, but, as the day was far advanced, he withdrew to recite a part of the Breviary.

On the deck below he found a secluded spot, with no one near save a dark figure which was leaning over the rail a few feet away, apparently intent on the noisy rejoicings of the steerage passengers below. The latter were eighteen hundred in number—all bound for sunny Italy. It seemed that the whole multitude were shouting, singing, and playing, altogether. To Father Tinniens it was a good suggestion of Babel in confusion; for the singing was without harmony and was produced from parched throats by hoarse voices, the result of endless repetitions of the same program night after night. A few shrill whistles, and improvised tin instruments answered for an orchestra, while the points of least resistance in the dense crowd determined the line of march for a disorderly and promiscuous procession of old and young. There was nothing to gratify aesthetic tastes in the performances, yet the

scene was interesting. It showed harmless, unenvious human nature finding innocent joys and diversion in the most untoward circumstances of hardship and poverty.

There, with no other light than that of the silvery moon and the obscure rays of a huge, smoky lantern that swung overhead, those nearly two thousand souls swayed gently back and forth, and up and down, as the ship breasted the great waves, seemingly without the slightest care or solicitude. It was an impressively weird sight, one that appealed to the better instincts of the observer and elicited more tender sympathy than the imposing array of fashion and social accomplishments in the improvised ball-room above.

Whether the silent stranger was similarly impressed, remains to be told. Father Tinniens did not approach him, but when satisfied with viewing the motley though happy crowd, he seated himself on one of the benches near by and completed the day's Office.

V.

As Father Tinniens arose from his place, the strange figure opposite stood erect,

turned towards him, and, after a momentary pause, began to walk away. Then suddenly stopping, as though to bethink himself of an object forgotten, he cast a glance at Father Tinniens and without further ado, exclaimed:

"I can always tell you and yours by the book you carry."

Father Tinniens recognized the voice. It was that of Fernandez, the Spaniard. So he replied in a tone of amusement:

"You have wonderful insight, sir."

"How many hours have you wasted on the Breviary to-day?" asked the physician.

"None, I hope," responded the priest. "Time thus spent is hardly wasted."

"But I think the 'Comedy of Errors' would do you more good. If you didn't like it, you could at least get a good sleep on the head of it."

"But I was not born to sleep," retorted the priest, whereupon the Spaniard, not having a ready answer, walked away.

Father Tinniens was far from thinking that he had embarrassed the voluble physician. A man endowed with such glibness is scarcely capable of confusion. It is only a question of opportunity with him

as to whether he storms or not, and when he does so, one may expect dews or fogs, sunshowers or tornadoes in any season.

After leisurely promenading on the vacated deck, Father Tinniens went to join his companions on the deck above, opposite the "ball-room." He found them earnestly engaged in a discussion which one voice was evidently trying to monopolize.

"I am as virtuous as any man," were the first words that reached his ears. "I never drink, nor indulge in profane language. I never dance—that's why I'm going about alone to-night—I don't believe in dancing. I'd join that bellowing procession of bears down-stairs first. I try to live according to my conscience, and that is enough for me. Besides, I've done a great deal of good for humanity since I became a doctor, more perhaps than a dozen priests." It was Fernandez who was raving. His last vexing remark caused the priest to withdraw for a while longer.

VI.

At that moment the dancing seemed to have ceased, and a pathetic melody was being sung by a rich, resonant, male voice. Father Tinniens drew near to appreciate

the selection the better. What was his surprise on reaching his former place of observation to learn that it was Lorenzo's friend who was entertaining the dancers at the invitation of the dentist, and how his heart throbbed with sympathy as he reflected on the kindness of the man who had devised this unwonted plan, to bring joy and happiness to a poor traveler! He could not help contrasting such philanthropy with the vain, proud, and overbearing spirit of the physician.

As the dancing was resumed, Father Tinniens sought his companions once more. He was not long in learning that the discussion, instead of abating, had become more heated and had taken a different trend.

"Bishops! Bishops!" were the first words that grated on his ears. "Bishops! Bishops are good money-makers. If I wanted to get rich, I'd become a bishop right away."

The priest approached stealthily and took a seat slightly behind the physician and in full view of the students. The former, unaware of his presence, continued his tirade and ended by extending his calumnies to every one connected with the

hierarchy. He then began to compassionate the "young men" who little knew of the degeneracy attaching to the Catholic clergy in general. "Oh, I admire you gentlemen," he said, "I admire you. I was once like you, but I changed before it got too late."

This language disgusted O'Brien, and the fervent cleric asked the Spaniard to specify in plain terms some of the charges he would bring against the clergy. "What makes you think, for instance, that bishops are so mercenary?"

"My personal experience," was the reply. "When I was married I had to pay a priest for marrying me and then the bishop for a dispensation—and a fat sum it was, too—as if that little pope could have prevented me from marrying unless I paid him!"

"If you had to pay for a dispensation," chimed in O'Brien, "it was because you could not obey some law of the Church, and the bishop had a right to what he asked, for he has to guard the laws."

"Fine answer!" said Fernandez, "you're learning the trade young."

"There's no trade in that, sir," rejoined O'Brien somewhat vexed.

"Not at all!" broke in Father Tinniens across the physician's shoulder. The latter turned around in astonishment. "If the bishop were allowed to keep that money, you would have some occasion for blaming him, but he is not. The money he received from you, he had to give to the poor, and if you begrudge him what you gave, you begrudge it to the poor as well."

"Mo-mo-more fine talk!" stuttered the Spaniard as he tried to gather his scattered wits together. "I expected that from you, because you are a priest."

"That is what my collar stands for," said Father Tinniens, whereupon the floundering physician suddenly braced himself up, turned his back to Father Tinniens, and began to make it clear to the students that he was done with priests.

"The priests are as avaricious as the bishops, and they do more harm. There are more of them and they know how to gain their own ends. They can't see bad enough before their eyes. They must hear people's secrets, because, they say, thoughts are sins and they alone can forgive them—as if a thought could be a sin!"

"But who says that every thought is a sin?" exclaimed Casey in indignation.

"Priests! Priests! Who else?"

"Beg your pardon," Father Tinniens made bold to say. "Only bad thoughts are sins and without bad thoughts there would never be bad actions."

"Bosh!" exclaimed the Spaniard, refusing to look at the priest.

"Keep cool a moment," the latter bade him. "Do you believe there is any difference between a man and a beast?"

"Well, I surely don't put myself on a level with a beast, although my ancestors might have been less fortunate. I wouldn't be surprised if many of them were chimpanzees."

"Perhaps they were," admitted Father Tinniens, "but what makes you superior to them?"

"Why, my education, my intelligence, inquisitive friend. See there! You priests always need to be instructed."

Fernandez spoke these last words across his shoulder, so the priest, in order to spare him future inconvenience, changed his position in the rear for one directly in front. While doing so he answered:

"Of course we are not all-knowing nor infallible, but we feel quite sure that if a man's intelligence is more noble than his

body, the acts of the intelligence are better than those of the body, if they are good; and worse, if they are bad."

"Oh! you want to say that a man with a bad thought is worse than a man who kills his friend."

"Not at all, sir, for the man who wilfully kills his friend has bad thoughts, and a will of the worst kind. And it is the thought and the will that make the act bad."

"Oh, I see! I may kill men by the hundred so long as I don't think of it!"

"But you don't imagine that you would be able to do that, sir, except in a dream or when you were half-mad. But of course I was not talking about madmen. I am speaking about men in their senses. I don't think you would hold a man guilty of murder, who would kill his friend through sheer accident as, for instance, in pointing a gun without knowing it was loaded or in missing his aim on a hunt. It is only if he intended to kill, that you could brand him as a murderer, and the intent to kill is nothing more than a bad thought and a bad will working together. Only in cases like that are the bad thoughts sins. They become sins just as soon as the will consents

to them, even though no action follows; but before the will consents, they are not sins at all."

"Oh, you have to dabble with thoughts and talk that way because you hear confessions! I have my own ideas about confession and I tell you now I don't believe in it. My wife wanted to go to confession every week after our marriage, but I put a stop to it. I just said to her, 'Look here; you keep away from those priests. If you want to go to confession, I'll be your confessor, and no one else.' She obeyed."

"But what right had you to interfere with the religious practices of your wife?"

"All the right in the world. I'm her husband."

"But does that entitle you to refuse her a liberty that you guard for yourself?"

"What liberty is that?"

"The liberty to live according to one's conscience. I heard you boast a few minutes ago that you refrained from everything that was bad, and that you did a great deal of good, merely because your conscience bade you act that way. Now, if your wife's conscience told her that she should not stay away from Mass on Sunday, or that she should go to confession

from time to time, why did you not allow her to follow it?"

"Simply because I wanted to cure her, and I've done so. She keeps away from church and priests now better than I do. Why, if I had not begun to educate her at once, she would have been preparing fish dinners for me every Friday and quoting the infallible Pope to me at every meal. Deliver me from a wife who would think that meat is poison on Friday or who believes in a Pope."

The students could stand this no longer, so Mullahy broke out:

"Who says that meat is poison on Friday?" and O'Brien, exclaimed, "An infallible husband is worse than an infallible Pope!" At this he got up and walked away. Mullahy now felt free to venture a pious explanation of the weekly abstinence. "If we abstain from meat on Friday, it is to honor our Saviour Who died for us that day."

"But you have to abstain from it," insisted the Spaniard. "You'd commit a sin if you didn't, and then you'd have to go to a priest to be absolved."

These last words were added in tones of mockery and the zealous student, all the more provoked, retorted:

"Yes, we'd commit a sin if we didn't, because we gave our word the day we were baptized, that we would obey the Church and all her commandments, and it would be dishonorable, were we to go back on such a solemn promise."

The words contained a strong hint, and the little party felt like applauding, for they had more than once surmised, now they even felt sure, that the self-opinionated Spaniard was a pervert from the faith. The words were grasped in their full significance, though Fernandez tried to appear undaunted. In a supreme effort to clear himself, he shrugged his shoulders, arose quickly, and with arrogant, dashing boldness, exclaimed in feigned disgust:

"Womanish! womanish! Why don't you become men? Why aren't you up-to-date? You needn't think that I believe in the Church, nor in Christ either—"

"Then it's not hard to see why you don't believe in the Pope," interrupted Father Tinniens. But the Spaniard continued almost in a frenzy:

"Christ was a good man like myself and many others who try to do what they think is right, but that's all. He couldn't have been God, because there is no God.

All this talk about God, the Church, and the Pope is sheer priestcraft and I've done with it."

Father Tinniens was watching his chance to deal a final blow, but the physican was too enraged at the moment. So the priest contented himself with demanding:

"Priestcraft! What do you mean by that?"

"It's a compound of fables and miracles, labeled 'faith,'" continued the Doctor. "Everything is faith! faith! faith! and when you ask what faith is they tell you 'it's what you must believe,' and when you ask, 'why am I to believe it,' they answer simply, 'you must.' It's a thing you can't see. It's a thing you can't prove, so you must shut your eyes and stop up your ears, and bow your head and say, 'Amen, I believe.' That's what faith is and that's what I call priestcraft. I never believed in it and I never will. I only believe what I can see."

"Whatever may be your ideas about priestcraft," urged the priest, "you are certainly wrong in saying that faith must be accepted simply because it must. We believe what faith teaches, because it is

God, Who taught it to us, and we do not need faith to tell us there is a God. If every picture tells of an artist, if every house of a builder, then the universe and its beauties bespeak a Creator, independently of faith."

"Don't think I'm going to swallow that, my friend. You talk about God the same way that you talk about faith. You say that God made Himself—as if there were anything more absurd!"

"No, we do not say that God made Himself," persisted the priest. "He had no need to be made. He always was and never began to be. If that were not so, there would be no God, no world, no Church to sneer at, no self-sufficient scoffers, and no atheists to arrogate to themselves a greater than Papal infallibility."

The physican calmed slightly at the remark and said in an apologetic, though slightly feverish, manner:

"Beg your pardon, my friends, if I talk a little hurriedly at times. I admire you, every one of you, but I can't help pitying such fine young men who consent to bind themselves down to such an unworthy—"

"Enough!" interrupted Father Tinniens. "Your sympathy is uncalled for,

and will not be appreciated. It is useless to apologize for the insults you have heaped upon us and upon the Church. The Church and we are one, and your admiration for us personally, counts for nothing."

"But I did not mean—"

"It is not for us to bother about what you meant, if you said the contrary. Friendly thoughts could hardly have been clothed in such unfriendly language. If you really wish to regain the favor you have lost, sir, the most effectual way to do so is to leave us in quiet, as you found us. That is the only apology we will accept."

The physician, for the moment crestfallen, and once more silenced, retired for the night.

VII.

It was during the concert the following morning that Father Tinniens and Lorenzo found themselves side by side. Both appreciated good music and had accordingly been present at the daily selections given by the band. This morning, however, Lorenzo seemed to grow indifferent as the program advanced, and at his suggestion,

the two acquaintances withdrew to the library.

While passing along the deck, they encountered Fernandez. He was taking his customary morning walk, and was, as he said, "looking for distractions from the monotonous music." He was growing weary of listening to such unaccomplished musicians "who reminded him always of the beastly performances of the steerage passengers that had so often grated on his ears from below." Lorenzo took exception to the word "beastly." He remarked that although the performances were crude and ill-suited to his tastes personally, his mind was broad enough to consider the limited education of the performers. He took pleasure in the reflection that persons in such circumstances could devise such a variety of ways to enjoy themselves. After all, he thought that men in all conditions of life were made to be happy and he had often envied the poor whose simplicity enabled them to derive so much pleasure from such scanty opportunities.

Fernandez was slightly abashed, not so much by the reproof, as by the nearness of Father Tinniens, to whom Lorenzo addressed his remarks. Bracing himself up,

however, according to his wont, he branched off in desultory fashion to other matters and departed without bringing any of his disconnected chatterings to a practical issue.

As Lorenzo and the young priest seated themselves in the library, the former observed that he had been greatly disappointed in his first apreciation of the Spaniard. Having heard that he was a physician, a graduate from one of the leading American universities, he thought that the man was at least cultured, but the past week's experience had taught him that his new acquaintance was prone to trifling, precipitate in behavior, and extremely superficial. Father Tinniens, recalling the declamations of the previous evening, might have consented to all three epithets, but he satisfied himself with observing that Fernandez professed to be an atheist.

"That would not surprise me," said the dentist. "He is a man who does not think. He does not know how to reason. I even doubt that he can be a good physician. He is hardly serious enough about serious things."

"But do you really think he is an atheist at heart?" asked the priest, more de-

sirous of fixing the dentist's mind upon its own difficulties, than upon the butterfly maneuverings of the physician.

"Well, that is another question," answered Lorenzo. "I think that an atheist, if there can be such a thing, is an ingrate of the worst type. Now, men like the physician are hardly capable of doing anything very good or very bad, and my candid opinion is that our friend talks a great deal just for the sake of talking and that he has no intimate convictions of his own."

"But do you really doubt that there can be full-fledged atheists?"

"To say the least, I have never met any though I have traveled a great deal. Those who claim they are atheists have either corrupt notions of morality and so try to forget there is a God, or they have a morbid passion for views and actions that startle. And with these I think that atheism is a disease rather than a conviction, for they can never discuss their position intelligibly."

"I have always thought that way," said Father Tinniens striving to conceal a growing impatience to have Lorenzo talk about his own case, "and that is why I experi-

enced a decided pleasure yesterday when you informed me that you were far from denying there is a God, and equally far from denying His absolute perfection."

"Oh, indeed," said Lorenzo in surprise. "I am as free from that error as I am from the opposite one that goes to make God too human."

"Too human!" remarked the priest, glad that the trend of the conversation had become so pronounced. "You surely do not think there are many anthropomorphists nowadays?"

"That may be so, but there are some very popular Christian beliefs that approach the old error very closely."

"What beliefs may those be?" inquired the priest.

"Well, I will tell you," continued the dentist, "for it is my inability to consent to them that makes me so different from my family. They believe them all, but I cannot. I cannot see, for instance, how Christ was God. For me, he seems to have been an ideal, an upright man, but not God. In picturing him as God, his disciples erred. They had been promised great power and success in the execution of their mission. They realized that suc-

cess, and in the fervor of their imagination they exalted their leader to the highest. They called him God. It was the mistake common to all ancient peoples, that they fell into. Their prestige was that of their leader, and after the leader's death, his renown depended on their success. That is why, in their simplicity, they spoke ridiculously of him. They bestowed upon him praise so exaggerated that it amounted to absurdity. My God could not have lowered Himself to such a degree as to become man. He is too infinite, too immense, to imprison Himself in the body of a babe. He is too majestic, too holy, too glorious, to close Himself up in a womb, to mix Himself up with flesh and blood. Besides, what reason had God for becoming man? He had no need of us and we are too insignificant to call for such humiliation on His part." Lorenzo grew eloquent at this effusion and would have gone on for some time, if Father Tinniens had not interrupted him.

"I appreciate your doubts perfectly," said the priest. "They center around the belief that Christ was God. Let us consider this first. Now—"

"But you see—"

"Indeed, you have plenty of others, but we must take them one by one, or end by talking to the wind. You have said that Christ was an honest, upright and noble man, have you not?"

"Certainly. It would be hard to deny that. Christ is the embodiment of all possible human perfection. He was a gift of God to the race. I love Him because He was so good and because He did so much to make men better. But—"

"Sir," interrupted the priest once more, "I believe you are really sincere. Now let me ask you, what is your authority for believing such sublime things of Christ?"

The dentist hesitated.

"I dare say there is only one on which you can depend and that is the New Testament. There you have several descriptions of Christ just as you understand Him. Now tell me frankly, if you accept the authority of Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Paul when they speak in such glowing terms of their human Master, why you do not grant them the same authority when they say that He was God?"

"Why? Because all parts of their writings are not equally reliable. Some are sound, but others are apocryphal. Take,

for example, the cursing of the fig tree. One Evangelist says that Christ cursed the fig tree because it bore no fruit, and he adds that it was not the season to bear. Why! The foolishness! The ignorance of that apostle to say that my all-wise God would curse a fig tree because it did not bear figs out of season! As if I would kill a baby because it could not work. That is the kind of ignorance that led those poor fishermen to think that Christ was God."

"But the story of the fig tree hardly counts here," urged Father Tinniens. "Christ, or any other man, might have cut down the fig tree, if He had wished to. The tree, unlike the helpless babe, possessed no rights to live. No injustice was done to it. Christ merely chose to use His free will in disposing of the tree. He might have hewn it to the ground at once, but He preferred to let it stand and wither away."

"For that reason the Sonship of God can stand no comparison with the fig-tree. The apostles did not merely say that Christ was God. They put the affirmation in Christ's own mouth. Christ Himself virtually said: 'I am the Son of God.' Now since you honor Christ as a sincere and honest man, you will have to

admit that He was convinced that He was God."

At this point the Spaniard, who had caught a few words while passing the window, laughed in a mocking strain, but the dentist, heedless of the ungentlemanly act, exclaimed:

"No! no! no! By calling Himself the Son of God, Christ merely meant that He was the creature of an infinitely good God, just as you and I and all Christians may style ourselves the sons of God."

"Ah! You mean that Christ spoke figuratively."

"Yes; certainly; just as He compared Himself to a vine, the light of the world, and other similar objects. No one imagines that Christ Who was wiser than Solomon would speak literally in such terms."

"But there is this difference between the comparisons you have referred to and Christ's divine Sonship. When Christ called Himself a light and a vine, it is clear that He could not have meant that He was a fiery flame or a woody growth springing from a root and bracing itself up with tendrils. But when He proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God, He obviously meant that He was really begotten of God and

was therefore God like His heavenly Father. That is what he was understood to say by the Pharisees and the people at large. That is 'the blasphemy' He uttered before the high priest during His trial. That is why He was persecuted and finally put to death. If He did not mean that He was the real and natural Son of God, there would have been no reason for His condemnation. The Apostles and the Jews themselves were the sons of God in the sense which you understand. How then could the latter who made up the rabble at Pilate's judgment-place, clamor for Christ's death, unless He claimed to be the Son of God with a Sonship superior to theirs? Or if they arose against Him, why did they not crucify the Apostles with Him?''

It was a new side of the question which had never before dawned on Lorenzo. It made him think. He was rather stunned, but still he ventured: "Ah! but it is so ridiculous that my God of majesty should have become a man, so incredible that He should have subjected Himself to the many inconveniences of human nature. No! It cannot be! How—''

"One moment, sir. Let us not stop

here. All that we need do for the present is to acknowledge that Christ claimed to be the Son of God. The assertion of that claim is a historical fact attested by several who saw Him die rather than retract it. If you insist only on the ridiculousness of such a claim, I beg you to pardon me if I ask you a few questions about the sentiments that make you do so. You certainly believe in God, as you have already told me."

"Indeed, from the bottom of my heart I believe in the great, grand God, the First Cause, and the abyss of all perfections."

"And you believe that He can do all things?"

"Most assuredly. He created this world and He could make millions of others thousands of times larger than this grain of sand on which we live. So vast is He."

"Very well. Then do you not believe that if God chose to do so, He could become man?"

"Ah! But He has no need of doing that. He is too great to need us and we are too vile for Him to become like us."

"I honor these reasons for the present, sir, but I beg you to answer the query di-

rectly. Do you not think that God could have become man if He wanted to?"

"Well; I will suppose it. What have you to say about it?"

"That is not enough, sir. You must either admit it or deny it. You say that God is almighty, that nothing is impossible to Him. You believe that His liberty knows no bounds, that He can choose whatever good He wishes to do. The upshot of all that is that if God should choose to make Himself man, He has the power to do so."

Hereupon, the Spaniard who had braced himself against the door a few minutes previously, asked Lorenzo if he were on the point of conversion. The dentist, somewhat vexed, bade the young man go away, alleging that he was occupied with matters a little too serious for him to consider. Father Tinniens felt that the rebuke was merited, yet he went on as if he had not heard it.

"Now, sir, tell me what objection you may have to what I have said. If you deny that God could choose to become man, you meddle with His infinite liberty. If you deny that He could have become man after choosing to do so, you destroy His almightiness."

"No; I cannot consent to that. My God is all-free and eternally omnipotent."

"Then He could have become man, should He have chosen to do so. Now I am going to give you a reason for such a choice. You speak truthfully when you say that God has no need of us. He is all-sufficient, of Himself. He is infinite and is far indeed from finding such base creatures necessary for His happiness. But still we are His handiwork. We are His creation. We, in all our lowliness, belong to Him."

"Yes, indeed. It is all perfectly clear."

"Well, then, because we belong to God, because we were His, and because we were so desperately in need of Him owing to our innate helplessness, He decided to raise us up to a higher level. He determined to help us, for He did not wish to have created us in vain. He decided to teach us, to make us more noble than we had been before, and to go about that work of improvement, He adapted Himself to us. He stooped to us. He became man."

"But such debasement! It is incredible."

"Incredible it would be, sir, were we to judge only from a narrow, human stand-

point. But you must remember that God in His goodness, is infinitely generous and it is only this boundless perfection that could have led Him to debase Himself to such a degree. He came to earth to treat with us as we treat with one another. He stooped as a mother to her child, as a master to his pupil."

Lorenzo grew more and more attentive. He even grew religious in his demeanor. He clasped his hands firmly and with his eyes fixed steadily on the table, seemed beyond the reach of distraction. So the priest continued:

"You are aware that no master begins at once to instruct his young pupils in the use of philosophical terms, in astronomy, botany, or the rest of the sciences. He speaks at first simple things. He uses child-like expressions and illustrations. He imitates perhaps childish gabble and plays at the little ones' games—all to win them. Then he advances them, striving at all times to make them better and more like himself. And indeed, his dignity, far from being compromised by these condescensions, rather increases with his success. Now, it was just that way with God. He was so good and merciful, whereas we

were so miserable and in such extreme want, that He determined to succor us. To do that, He chose, in His infinite wisdom, to accommodate Himself to us, to become like one of us. He determined to become man in order to place Himself in a condition in which we might see Him, talk with Him, feel the throbbings of His heart, and be convinced that He loves us. He acted like a schoolmaster teaching his pupil."

"Like a schoolmaster! Ah! how beautiful!"

"Indeed, sir, is that not reasonable?"

"Ah! But God was not obliged to do that."

"True! He was not obliged to, but He is, as you have so well stated, the abyss of all perfection and therefore He is all good and filled with love. It was His goodness, His infinite love and mercy that prompted Him to stoop so low. He was not obliged to become man. In His infinite wisdom, He knew a thousand other ways of drawing us to Himself, yet His surpassing liberty and tender compassion led Him to choose that one that would appeal to us most. That is to say, He chose to become human to save human man."

"So He condescended like a schoolmas-

ter!" Lorenzo seemed absorbed in the thought.

"Yes," continued the priest, "and I do not think you can call the Incarnation ridiculous, when viewed in this light. God lost none of His illimitable majesty in becoming man and so there was no absurdity in the claims of Christ. Rather they were plausible in the highest degree and there can be no sound reason for denying them."

"Well, then, if Christ is God, He will enlighten me, for I am sincere."

"Indeed, sir, if, as I believe, you are at heart sincere, your prayer of hope will be answered. Christ is as good and merciful now as when He was on earth. All that is required of any of us is that we do what lies in our power to discover the truth, and abide by it. If one does that, the chances are that the amiable and adorable Christ will surely enlighten him sooner or later."

"Yes! and me, too," exclaimed the dentist, "BECAUSE I LOVE HIM." Lorenzo seemed to be totally enrapt in pious reflection. From that on, he grew even more serious than he had been before, and Father Tinniens began to feel with confidence that his new friend was a stray

sheep seeking the true fold. "And me, too, because I love Him!" What simple words and how full of hope! They seemed to be inspired by deep thought and deeper sentiment, such as could spring only from a tender heart.

VIII.

Father Tinniens left the dentist in meditation. By this time the two continents of Europe and Africa had been sighted. All eyes were turned towards them. Kodaks, field-glasses and telescopes were being displayed on all sides. A few of the younger passengers were filling their note-books while others were engaged in sketching. Some found the sight "lovely"; others, "grand"; a few others, "sublime"; and a slender banker from New England, "divine."

At this climax, the little group of ecclesiastics, Father Tinniens included, set about excogitating an epithet that would rival all others. But before they succeeded, the Spaniard, who was far from being lost in admiration, strutted by rather proudly and exclaimed: "I can afford to throw Shakespeare overboard now. I land in four hours." He passed on unnoticed.

The students felt that his departure would be to their liking, for he could then no longer molest them. Four hours later he disembarked, more estranged, however, from the little group than when he had boarded the steamer at New York.

Lorenzo frequently spoke to the ecclesiastics during the few remaining days of the voyage, but always with much reserve and with increased respect. However, he refrained from touching further on religious matters. Whether he had really been moved by the discussions he had brought about is known to himself and to God. Father Tinniens thought he was, for the last words of the dentist seemed to him more eloquent than an open admission: "And me, too, because I love Him!"

Indeed, may our Saviour enlighten Lorenzo, for he showed himself at least a man of good will. Yet he was a man who had not tasted of the peace that was heralded by the angels at Bethlehem; and since it is that peace which Christ came to establish, let us pray that our Saviour's mission may not prove ineffectual in Lorenzo's regard.

PERSUADED?

LEAVES FROM A TRAVELER'S DIARY.

FATHER TINNIENS, the missionary, never neglected an opportunity for discussing things religious with his fellow travelers, especially when they made the way easy.

He did not, indeed, consider himself especially honored in gaining the confidence of non-Catholics, yet he always made it a point when conversing with them on religious topics to impress upon them the fact that Catholics are imbued with the spirit of the Gospel no less than Protestants; and, moreover, that Catholics could not be satisfied with the spirit of the Gospel, unless it were proved to them that it contains the whole of the spirit of Christ.

But Mr. Rothstock was not going to give occasion to have this truth drawn out during their brief chat. He was too much preoccupied with a multitude of small grudges against "Romanism" that swarmed about in his mind like microbes in unhealthful water. Put together they had for him an

overwhelming and crushing force against what he felt was the bane of medieval and modern times. He had studied Romanism. He had seen it in practice. He had scrutinized it in the very heart of Christendom. He had visited Ste. Anne de Beaupré, St. James of Compostella, Lourdes, Rome, Jerusalem, and he had come away from all these places persuaded that Moses might once more conscientiously dash the Tables of the Law to pieces through indignation at the superstition and idolatry that reigned everywhere. At Lourdes it was the cult of "the Virgin;" at Ste. Anne's and St. James's it was a sort of refined fetichism; at Rome it was Antichrist, while at Jerusalem it was the "abomination of desolation."

For all that, Mr. Rothstock was not prejudiced against Catholicism, nor did he mean to speak in an offensive strain. If he treated frankly of odious matters, of things that were to him an eyesore, it was because he judged them to be real, crying evils that must be uprooted, sooner or later, in behalf of the nobler portion of the race, and he wished merely to contribute his humble efforts towards encouraging a reaction and thus bring about the desired

amelioration of religious and social conditions as soon as possible.

"What, then, can the devout worshipers at Lourdes, Rome, and Jerusalem have done to you?" pertinently asked Father Tinniens, as he learned that his supposed aggressor was a man of such disinterestedness and broad philanthropy.

"To me?" repeated the minister. "That makes little difference. I am not seeking any personal benefit in the plans I would enforce."

But the priest begged leave to ask what outrages in particular could so much engage his companion's attention.

"I did not employ the term 'outrages'" was the hesitating reply, "yet, since you suggest it and since it suits my idea, I'll use it. I call the fostering of ignorance outrage. I call the wilful patronage of superstition outrage. I call the impositions of an infallible Pope, with all their attendant evils, an outrage of the most despicable character."

"Ah! that is more definite," put in Father Tinniens, "and, I dare say, more gentlemanly, for when you speak openly of the Holy Father, even though it be to malign him, I know where we are. Until

you mentioned him, you seemed to act covertly. By veiling your accusations and labeling them ' ignorance,' ' superstition,' ' Antichrist ' and the like, you led me to think you were a man who liked to give thrusts in the dark, or rather, that you were one who conscientiously, though unconsciously, hated his neighbor with the sublime conviction that he did so for the love of God."

Mr. Rothstock seemed hardly able to grasp the gist of the reply, yet he felt it implied a demand for explanation which clearly placed him under obligation. So in a less animated mood he continued:

" What I dislike about all sanctuaries is the bartering out of indulgences. Take, for instance, the Scala Santa at Rome. While there I saw dozens of people going up and down the stairs on their knees because they read on a sign overhead that if they did so, and meditated on the Passion of Christ, they would gain a fabulous indulgence of I forget how many years. Why, such outlandish practices as that have no other effect than to put a premium on superstition and so stunt the growth of man's moral being, for in the hope of gaining an indulgence those ignorant people forget

the necessity of interior correction and renewal of life."

"I do not see how the effects can be so disastrous as you think," remarked Father Tinniens. "Perhaps you are not aware of the nature of an indulgence, or of the conditions required to gain one. If the pilgrims of whom you speak were in need of interior renewal—I mean, if they were in the state of sin and refused to rise therefrom—they might climb and descend those stairs until doomsday, and not one of the Sovereign Pontiffs, nor all of them together, could grant them a single day's indulgence. Moreover, you have remarked that they must meditate on the Passion. That is as indispensable as going up and down the steps. What is more, it is an act of devotion and of itself might do the soul more good than the indulgence given on account of it. Yet, if the indulgence had not been offered, that act of piety would in many cases have been neglected."

"That may be, but it is the indulgence-principle that is faulty. Sin must always be forgiven by God in secret and never as a result of such pantomimic performances."

"But an indulgence is not a forgiveness

of sin. It is a remission of only the penalty that the sinner would have to undergo for his offences either in this life or in the next. He may be guiltless before God; he may have repented for all his transgressions, and yet he has a fine to pay, a chastisement to undergo. In ancient times this chastisement was determined by the Church. For certain offences it was necessary to spend whole months fasting on bread and water, to give large alms, to go to great inconvenience in doing other acts of mercy, to undertake long pilgrimages afoot, and the like, and yet no one with correct ideas of the justice and holiness of God can say that such penances as these were greater than the sins deserved. Yet to-day, such penalties could not be imposed and the Church, like a kind mother, remits them, as she has the right to do, by granting indulgences."

"Oh, yes!" replied Mr. Rothstock, in an impatient and sceptical tone, "but your Church has the presumption to forgive sins as well as to remit penalties. The confessional stole, you know, is as great a panacea as the Immaculate Conception at Lourdes. And, then, there is the infallible Pope to approve of all. Do you not hon-

estly think that the Roman Church would be a great deal better off and more amicable with its sister churches if it abolished the confessional and laid down its authority?''

''But the Roman Church is not free to lay down her authority,'' answered Father Tinniens with much firmness. ''She has been too strongly charged by our Saviour Himself to guard it jealously until the end of time; and she will ever remain faithful to that charge, for her divine Founder Himself has promised her a final victory and complete triumph over all her enemies.''

Hereupon, Mr. Rothstock interrupted the priest. He was regretfully obliged to take his leave, yet an exchange of visiting cards guaranteed to Father Tinniens an opportunity of reaching his new acquaintance more effectually, perhaps, because more coolly and deliberately, by letter. Their correspondence follows:

II.

Rev. Mr. Rothstock:

Dear Sir:—Despite the very well-defined opposition that we evinced towards each other a few days ago, it is evident

that we possess much in common. You are a Christian. So am I. You love mankind. So do I. You believe in the uprooting of evils. So do I. Perhaps it is only a question of which evils must be torn up and which must be tolerated. I would not like to place you in the category of those whom the Prophet condemns for calling white black and black white, sweet sour and sour sweet, yet I dare say you make a woeful blunder in thinking that Catholicism, which you strove to condemn wholesale, is but a morbid parasite absorbing the sap and stunting the growth of "the noblest part of the race."

It was the outward signs of devotion to which you chiefly took exception. You called them "pantomimic" and said they reminded you of "fetichism." The same might be said of all forms of courtesy. They are "pantomimic," and the more they are multiplied or the more stringent they become, so much the more ridiculous does man make himself in submitting to them. Yet a man without politeness is not a gentleman, and if he wilfully remains without it or disparages it, he is doing all that lies in his power to effect a readoption of the ways and usages of savagery. As

one's education advances, he becomes more refined. Consequently, since religion is the foremost element in a Christian's education, I cannot understand how he can consistently object to the use of an established etiquette during prayer or any other religious exercise, knowing, as he does, that at such moments the soul presents itself before the divine Majesty and endeavors to take part in a royal function where angels bow down and adore.

But that is a small matter. You aspersed doctrines tnat I have cherished from my youth as those of Christ, and I feel called upon to protest. Your reference to the Immaculate Conception bordered on the disrespectful, yet I presume you spoke without malice, and I ought perhaps to overlook your manner of speaking and do what I can to cure in you the evil which you so severely condemn in others.

The Immaculate Conception is not an object of veneration at Lourdes alone. It is a belief of the Universal Church, and it is a mystery particularly dear to us Americans, for THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. We dare even to think, at times, that the peace and prosperity that have gained for

our country a unique and most enviable fame are ascribable in great part to the patronage of her who is thus honored.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has always been considered by Christians more holy than the angels.

The grounds for thinking our dearest Mother so holy are that she was elected from amongst all women to be the tabernacle of the Most High, and since the Son of God, like His heavenly Father, dwells not in temples "made with hands," the only way to keep our ideas of His measureless sanctity untarnished is by saying that He would never have consented to take upon Himself flesh that had been once subject to sin. His mother, then, must always have been pure. Even so early as the fifth century Catholics honored her nativity, and two or three centuries later they began to inquire if they might not also celebrate religiously the moment when her soul was infused into her body. Some hesitated, for they wondered if Christ did not have to redeem His Mother as well as us, not from any personal sin, but from the racial guilt transmitted by our first parents. They felt that he did, and they were right, yet they found themselves face to face

with a movement that seemed inspired and which could not be checked. Nearly all Christendom denied that such guilt had been contracted, and the Immaculate Conception became a world-wide devotion. To-day there is no longer room for doubt. Rome—the only power on earth that could put an end to the controversy—has spoken and proclaimed that the special privilege reserved for the Mother of God was that she was redeemed, not by being washed from original sin, but by being totally preserved from contracting it. Why, then, do you despise those who honor her whom Christ honored, her whom God the Father and the Holy Ghost joined in venerating? Think not it is a new dogma. We venerate only what the first Christians venerated —the sanctity of God's Mother.

I know you will tell me I have swallowed a camel. It was Rome that intervened—the abode of "Antichrist." But I am not affrighted by names. It is enough for me to know that Christ built His Church on "a rock." If the Papacy is not that rock, in vain do I look elsewhere to find it. Outside the Church all is turmoil and confusion. Divisions multiply and new religions spring up every day.

There is no vital bond of union in Protestantism except hereditary opposition to the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the Catholic Church is THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN MAINTAIN AUTHORITY OVER HER CHILDREN. She alone can bid those she loves most dearly to submit to confiscation of property, outlawry and martyrdom, and be obeyed. She is the only Church that can brook persecution with the assurance that she will be better after it than before.

Her power to forgive sins depends entirely on the will of Christ, of which she alone is the interpreter. I need only remark that confession is a holy institution and an incalculable help even in the attainment of social rectitude. It goes to the bottom of wrongs, and by correcting the individual, wields a powerful influence on the society of which he forms a part. How many have been deterred from compromising their honor before man, as well as before God, by the mere thought: "If I do that, I shall have to weep for it in the confessional." Penitence, indeed, is sweet, but it costs too dear. Such is the doctrine inculcated by every confessor. No greater evil could befall a Christian than the loss of God's friendship, and the penitent is

exhorted to return to his heavenly Father's house.

If you question the efficacy of the priest's forgiveness, I can only say to you: The Church that is built on a rock knows the length and breadth of its teachings and authority and where it got both, and such a Church is the Church of Christ.

Sincerely yours,

A. J. Tinniens.

III.

Following is Mr. Rothstock's reply:

Dear Sir and Brother:—I have often thought if we could see one another as we see ourselves, we would come nearer carrying out the designs of Jesus than we actually do. Certain it is, since I, the "Evangelical," have exchanged views with you, the "Roman Friar," my heart has softened and I have awakened to the conviction that the barrier which separates us may not be quite so formidable as I had at first imagined. However, I perceive it is an immovable one for the present. Yet, since you have taken the liberty to speak most frankly in the defense of Roman Catholicism, I feel privileged to say a few words for the Evangelical side.

I honor one and all of your religious sentiments. I like to think of you as an intelligent co-worker in the vineyard of Christ. Yet I must say the reasons you give for your belief seem puerile to me. The one final clincher for all is the authority of the "Catholic Church." I object to such an exclusive use of the term "Catholic," but let that go. It is enough to state that the authority of the Roman Church is a thing that is by no means proved, and, consequently, all that is built thereon must totter and fall.

Your interpretation of the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," is to my mind contrary to the obvious sense of Christ's words. For us the Papacy is but a relic of Roman Imperialism. Indeed, I am aware that its support wields a powerful influence in sustaining the great body of the Roman Catholic clergy and in keeping them above the common people, whom they treat as children. But in the cause of true religion it would be better to come down to the level of the people, to mix with them and throw aside the medieval fancy that the saviours of the race, the priestly caste, are set apart and sanctified by the laying-on of hands.

If Christ were really the founder of your Church He would have written a whole detailed code of ritual and ceremonial enactments. He would not have been satisfied with the Gospel. The Church in which you take such pride has stultified itself. It has accepted the Gospel, but has heaped upon it masses of sheer "Aberglaube" that are no longer tolerable to the intelligent. I cannot conceive how you can shut your eyes so easily to such an abuse.

It would take too much time to descend to the minor issues raised in your letter. I merely wish to say that these are days in which we should not fear to break away from the apron-strings of medieval ignorance and formalism. We are called upon to live in the present and for both the present and the future. Put the idolatry of the Virgin down where it belongs—among your relics of the Dark Ages. Take action against the confessional instead of in its favor, for the vaunted sanctity of the priesthood is defiled by upholding it. Only a few days ago the papers of our city were filled with a story of one of its repeated abuses. "Mike" McCarthy, a notorious criminal, was about to be executed. The

priest came forth and heard his confession. Straightway it was proclaimed to the world that "Mike" had received absolution and had been forgiven, and was just as well prepared for the hereafter as the saints of yore. Now I think that Mike's deeds had gone before him to judgment and that no such superficial submission to the outward requirements imposed by a Church of any kind could have sufficed to whiten such a filthy soul. I do not, indeed, deny such a thing as a deathbed repentance. I remember too well the penitent thief. But I do deny that the petty talk of a priest is capable of bringing about such a thorough and heartfelt change as the sight of the crucified and agonizing Master.

It is not my wish to lead you away from Romanism, but I would have you embrace the broad principles of Evangelicalism. The divisions you allude to among us are only superficial. Touch the fundamentals of faith and the entire Evangelical body rises as a man to protest against the sacrilege. Yet we do not object to various constructions of Truth. They are but the necessary consequences of finite intelligence coming in contact with the Infinite.

For the rest, it is vitality we aim at and not formality or formalism. Preach the Gospel, and its fruits spring up spontaneously. There is no need of human authority interfering. The Word of God is of itself fecund beyond measure, and statistics prove that in our country, at least, the Evangelical method of propagating it is destined to gain the day.

Lay aside, therefore, those preconceived ideas about the Church and Pope and seek the life-giving grace that is being poured out on every side. There is no need of an exterior element in religious worship. Let you and me come together with Christ in the midst, be it in the most remote corner of the globe, and there we have a Church in the strictest sense of the term.

Be not blinded by childish fancies. We are on the eve of great happenings, when nations shall be formed in a day. Take no part, therefore, with institutions that are doomed to die. Throw yourself heartily into the battle. Place yourself in the ranks of Evangelicalism, for which the victory is destined. Then you will have occasion to glory in your strength. The day is not far off when from the smoldering ruins of empires Evangelicalism shall rise,

phenix-like, and shall show itself a life-saving—a world-saving—power, replete with the spirit of Christ, because destined by Him for an eternal and God-inspired mission.

Should you choose to continue this correspondence I shall do what I can to contribute my share, but I may not always be able to answer punctually, owing to my manifold duties as pastor.

Yours sincerely,

H. Kirby Rothstock.

IV.

The first impression produced on Father Tinniens by the reading of this apostolic reply was one of doubt as to whether Mr. Rothstock in his study were the same as Mr. Rothstock on a journey. The minister had changed his attitude from one of rude attack to one of zealous proselytism. The staunch Catholic missionary replied as follows:

Dear Mr. Rothstock:—We are certainly getting to understand each other, and I feel it a duty to congratulate you on having gone to the very bottom of the questions involved. The clincher for me in the

acceptance of any and all Catholic doctrines is the authority of the Church that teaches them. You deny that that Church has authority and you repudiate its teachings for the simple reason that they are not contained in the Gospel. Which of us is right? Is the Church too much or is the Gospel enough?

First of all, you dislike my narrow use of the name Catholic, so, in order to come to terms, I will replace it with its only justifiable equivalent, "Roman."

The Roman Church, and it alone, is the Church of Christ, for it is built upon a rock, and that rock is the Papacy. You object to my interpretation of the words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." I need only answer that Holtzmann with certain other non-Catholic scholars admit that the Roman way of understanding the passage is the only one, whereupon they infer that it was not in the Gospel originally but was afterwards placed there by interested parties.

However, Rome does not base her claim upon that passage alone. She has always seen therein very little more than a promise of stability to the Church of Christ, which quality was to centre, in some way

or other, about the foremost among the Apostles: "Thou art Peter," that is to say: "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I SHALL build my Church." The Church had not yet been built.

It was after the resurrection that authority was entrusted to the Prince of the Apostles; then it was that he was bidden to feed the "sheep" as well as the "lambs" of the flock of Christ. The whole flock was at that moment made his and not any particular part of it.

But that is not enough. The Roman Church has never based any of her claims solely on the Gospel. It would be shameful for her to stop so short of the mark. It was she who produced the Gospel and not "e converso." Whatever you may think of the Papacy, Christ certainly founded His Church on a rock, and not on a book. Nor may you claim that "the Book," that is, the Gospel, is the rock, for the Gospel did not exist in the time of Christ nor for long years afterwards. Not only that, but Christ neither wrote nor gave a command to write. His precept was "Preach," and it was by preaching that Christianity was introduced everywhere. The Gospel was an afterthought and to

claim it as the sole basis of Christianity would be to put the cart before the horse. In short, the chief intrinsic reason for the acceptance of the Gospels when they were written was that they contained nothing contrary to the beliefs of the already established Church. They were understood in the light of that Church's teachings and not as an independent source of truth. They were a picture of Christ as Christ was known to His immediate disciples, and only as such were they placed in the hands of the faithful.

The Roman Church then, is right in maintaining that same attitude to-day and in refusing to understand the Gospels, or any part of them, except in accordance with those traditional beliefs which it holds in virtue of a divine commission.

Had you lived before the Reformation, you would have experienced no more difficulty in thinking as we Romans do than did Martin Luther himself until the day that he made up his mind to get married. Then it would have been clear to you what was the Book, and who the Rock. But now you and all Protestants are being led by the blind and are leaders of the blind. You accept the Book and the traditions of men

as to its contents, and there you stop. The printed Word of God you idolize, but the living Word of God, that which comes from His lips, you ignore. You may do it unwittingly, and so be excused from personal guilt, but, like unconverted Saul, you are nevertheless kicking against the goad.

Excuse me for speaking so plainly in defence of the Church which I love as I love my life. I am convinced that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, that the strength of the body is in its joints, and that the Reformation that joins the Protestantism of to-day with the Romanism of yesterday is a link of sand, a joint rife with corruption. Take off your green spectacles and Romanism will no longer seem a mass of verdigris. Look around you with the naked eye and you will see how Protestantism is dancing on crutches.

Touching Roman Imperialism, you make the same mistake that you do about the Gospel. The Church did not grow up with it nor on account of it. It lived before it and it has survived it, and it will live on with the same surety as the Word of God that cannot pass away.

If Christ should have given us a Levitical Code, as Moses gave the Jews, then He

should also have given you the Gospel; but He did neither. Why stick so fast to such littleness of judgment?

Your appeal to STATISTICS amounts to ZERO. You should have gone farther and seen that the growth of atheism and infidelity in the United States surpasses that of Protestantism. If statistics prove anything, they cry loud for ungodliness. The Moslem will say as much for Mohammedanism, the Hindoo for Brahminism, the Chinaman for Confucianism as you say for Protestantism, and each appeals to the statistics of his own country, and the statistics, in turn, show that he has good reasons for doing so.

I deny, then, that the success of Protestantism comes from the inherent efficacy of the Word of God when preached. Rather it is produced by the instinctive craving in man's breast for God and religion—I mean for God and a bond of union with God. Man is necessarily a religious creature, and because he cannot break away from his own nature he is bound to accept at least the creeds current roundabout him. In Europe and America he accepts Christianity. In Asia and Africa he identifies himself with pagan cults.

Protestantism flourishes because human nature flourishes, and if it spreads faster than Romanism, it is because it is more human and less divine. Remember that cockle used to grow in the same field as wheat in our Lord's time. Men must walk in some path, but they choose by preference a broad one.

But men are logical as well as religious, and once they accept a principle they push it to its utmost conclusions. Protestantism is doomed. It leads to Rationalism and its first-fruits are fast ripening. Your reasons for accepting the Gospel are wholly subjective. You cannot prove its authority. You claim it is inspired, but you cannot demonstrate its inspiration. You have built your Church upon it like a statue in the air. There is no pedestal beneath, so that both must be unreal.

If you believe the Gospel is inspired, it is because the Roman Church taught you so long, long ago, and if you find the spirit of Christ in your religious body, it is as a relic of bygone days, so deeply rooted that it could not be pulled up at will. But the way of all flesh is the same. It was Protestantism, not Roman Catholicism, that gave birth to Rationalism. Protestant

Christianity must yield to a Rationalistic Christianity, where Christ will be but a philosopher, one step higher up than Socrates. You deny that Roman Catholicism is in the Gospel. I have shown you why it was never intended to be put there. Now it is time to say that Protestantism is not there either, so that the Gospel can be no check to its downward course.

You must pray in secret and only in secret. You must repent in secret, though you sin in public. The poor heart must do all. The hands, the lips, the tongue, the brain, may grow feverish and rebel, but the poor heart, and it alone, must make up for all afterwards. Is that enough? Ah, if that heart were filled with love for a creature no one would reproach it for giving outward expression to its emotions. If that heart were crushed with human sorrow, it would bring tears to the eyes, pallor to the cheeks, sobs and sighs to the quivering lips, but when it is a question of divine worship, that poor heart, instead of performing acts most perfect for its nature, must keep silent and do violence to itself—lest its works should be seen by men, lest they should be led thereby to adore their heavenly Father!

No, Protestantism is the work of man, and, like every other work of man, it must die. It calls itself Christian and adores Christ as God, but it rejects the work of Christ in shutting its ears to the teachings of the Church. For individual believers, the Gospel, unless authoritatively interpreted, does not prove the divinity of Christ any more than it proves the divine institution of Protestantism; and if men of to-day can uphold the latter as a supremely religious organization, Christian because of its irresistible vitality in the work of proselytism, then I must confess that the same psychic phenomenon working nineteen hundred years ago in the mind of the most religious man the race has ever produced, was sufficient to make that man think himself both Christ and God. On purely Protestant principles, if these be pressed to their final issue, Christ is only a philosopher,—the type of human perfection, it is true,—but He stultified himself in claiming divine Sonship. The Rationalists, therefore, in denying Christ's divinity, are pushing Protestant doctrine to its ultimate conclusion; and for that reason, were I to cease to be a Roman Catholic, I could not stop

at the half-way house of Protestantism. I would have to go all the way and become a Rationalist, heart and soul.

Religion needs a Church and without a Church there is no religion. But I do not understand by a Church what you understand by it. It is not enough to come together in Christ's name in order to form a Church, and neither Christ nor the Gospel says so anywhere. That idea is another ready-made teaching of Protestant Illuminism. Christ's Church is not an institution that may be formed and disunited at will. It is a permanent organization of unfailing oneness, because of the oneness of its Founder, its oneness of doctrine and its singleness of purpose. Such a oneness is not to be found in Protestantism.

Your "various constructions of Truth" amount to absolute contradictions, as the multitude of Protestant sects plainly shows. Moreover, you are not in harmony as to "fundamentals," if such you choose to call them. The truth is, that Protestantism is but an international fraternity for the avowed purpose of expressing the religious idea—and opposing Catholicity(?)—so that there are as many different varieties of Protestantism as there are denominations

or groups of friends. It is not, therefore, entitled to call itself a Church in the sense in which Christ used that term.

But this is precisely what it undertakes to do, as your definition shows. At the period of the Reformation, Protestantism found the old idea that had come down through the Apostles from Christ Himself too unyielding, so they adopted a new one more to their liking. Catholics, on the contrary, kept in the beaten path. The Church for them is a real exterior authority, independent of their making, and totally dependent on heaven alone for its permanence. To it they bow as they would bow to Christ; they know that Christ has not left them orphans. Yes, they are "children," children of God and of His Church, and they do not spurn the epithet.

I am not going to bother about the confessional or the laying-on of hands. Once I admit the authority of the Church, I find one of its doctrines just as easy to believe as another. Its authority is their sole and entire proof. Its word is God's word. Yet I shall venture a final word about Mike McCarthy. Your remarks were prompted by the "Touch-me-not-for-I-am-clean" spirit. Are you really of-

fended because we walk with sinners and eat with them—you who boast about stooping to the people and mixing with them in order to bring them up to your level? Ah! we mingle with sinners without hesitation and WE DO NOT HAVE TO STOOP to do so. Think of poor Mike McCarthy as you wish. If he received absolution, it was because he gave signs of an interior repentance, even as did the penitent thief on the cross, and not because of a mere outward submission to an empty ceremonial. The Church demands more than that, and his confessor was in a better position to judge of his spiritual condition than either you or I. For my part, I prefer to think that the Good Samaritan poured oil and balm into his festering wounds and that this poor sinner was found worthy of God's mercy in his dying moments.

Sincerely yours,

A. J. Tinniens.

To this epistle Rev. Mr. Rothstock made no reply. Was he PERSUADED?

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The two hundred and twenty-nine thousand students who to-day are attending institutions of higher learning in the United States will undeniably be the ruling power of the land a few years hence. They will control the Government, the State and educational institutions, the great industries, the stage, the popular novel, and the daily newspaper. They will direct American thought. They will influence in great measure America's morality, with its religion or irreligion. The country, in a word, will be what they make it, for the multitude will follow their leadership. This being the case, an examination of the principles operating in their formation will be both interesting and profitable.

The following propositions purport to come from the lips and pens of professors in the foremost universities in the land. Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Syracuse, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Chicago, and other universities are represented. The oracles say:

(1) Heaven has nothing to do with humanity.

(2) The change from religion to religion is like getting a new hat.

(3) The Decalogue is no more sacred than a syllabus poem.

(4) The majority can make anything right.

(5) Ethics grow out of custom and ought to be discarded.

(6) Immorality is mere contravention to standards fixed by the common consent of society.

(7) Pair marriage is produced by the conditions of society and is transitory.

(8) The spontaneous preference of a man and a woman should not be held in check, since every normal man and woman has room for more than one person in his heart.

(9) The home as an institution is doomed.

(10) The horror of incest is based upon a myth.

The list might be extended, but a more complete enumeration of errors so unblushingly enunciated would prove more startling than salutary.

II.

Some time ago a Catholic editor, wishing to put the sum total of Modernism in a nutshell, described it as unhappily reversing the ancient creed of God creating man into the more novel one of man creating God. This fantastic doctrine is the basic principle of the philosophy taught in many American universities. If, as is clearly stated in the first proposition, heaven has nothing to do with humanity, then God might just as well be non-existent. Now, if there is no God, or if God is wholly unconcerned about human activity, then mankind has been mistaken all along in thinking the contrary; and the God Who has enjoyed so prominent a place in man's heart, soul and affections, in all ages, was but the product of human fancy or conventionality.

From this proposition, as a premise, the others in the above series flow as naturally as water from a spring. Once God, or divine intervention in human affairs, is discarded, usage, custom and conventionality step in to take their place. These are asserted to have been the supreme creative and preservative energies of religion, mor-

ality, society and the home. Religion and morality are stated to have had binding force, only because man was accustomed to give it to them.[1] Social and home life have had their prestige only because each successive generation has been enthralled by the traditions and practices of its predecessors. Hence, in an age like ours, when reason is growing conscious of its independence, these institutions, all-holy though they be, are doomed for the same cause that God is doomed. Man was born free. So, then, should he live, so should he die!

Explain this irreligious system as you may, it cannot be palliated. Any attempt at philosophical analysis will be but a sham unless it tend to throw into greater relief the hideousness of this school of error. The immediate consequences of this kind of teaching are indicated by the following incident: A certain Catholic student who attends one of the universities above named naïvely observed to the writer recently that he purposely refrained from reading Catholic periodicals because, he said, "they are all the time pouring on the vitriol!" Perhaps he was right! Perhaps

[1] Mos e more.

the periodicals are right, too! It is just such weaklings as these who are being poisoned the land over. Gradually they learn to say with Tennyson's lotus-eaters:

> "Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
> Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea,
> Death is the end of life; ah, why
> Should life all labor be?
> Let us alone."

III.

It is the question of morality that chiefly concerns us. What constitutes morality? Various explanations have been offered, some of which are anything but satisfying. There is a "morale physiologique," and a "morale psychologique," and a "morale esthétique." The first of these recognizes Nature's retribution for the immoral violation of Nature's laws; the second sees in ennobling affection and sympathy a motive force which leads to the observance of the Golden Rule; the third says: "Do good because good is beautiful, shun evil because of its deformity." But none of these standards contains the first essential of morality. The theory on which the "morale physiologique" bases its claim

is untenable and puerile. It merely holds that Nature resents abuse of her laws and sometimes afflicts the transgressor. In the "morale psychologique" the fascinating charm of sympathy influences too few to be held up as a standard for all. Pragmatic natures, especially, are alien to it. As for the "morale esthétique," the beauty of virtue and the ugliness of vice are too relative and too abstract to be grasped by the multitude. Given a well-defined and divinely sanctioned moral standard, this triple "morale" will have a meaning, but without that it is too fantastic, too shallow and soulless, to be worthy of the name it bears.

What is morality? It is what men make it, say the Positivists, for "the majority can make anything right" (prop. 4) God has been dethroned. What remains but to enthrone omnipotent man in his place!

It would be an admission of helplessness to say we shall meet these men on their own ground. When Lazarus will moisten the lips of Dives, when Christ will stoop to lift up Belial, then, and not till then, can we hope for an "entente" with these breeders of corruption. There is nothing in common between us. Theology

and metaphysics are despised by them because God and Law, the objects of these sciences, have been destroyed. "A priori" reasoning is turned to ridicule, because the point from which it starts has been annihilated. It would be futile for us to say that although God is, as we know, the firm support and sanctioner of the moral order, we shall nevertheless treat with our adversaries without considering Him.[2] Such an abstraction would be absurdly nugatory. To come to terms it would not be enough to leave God unconsidered; it would be required to imitate those we would fain convince, and *deny* His existence, or at least His influence altogether. "Formerly," writes an influential professor, "the best man in the community was the good Samaritan, but now society owes its debt to the wealthy and far-seeing citizenry that paves, and lights, and polices the road to Jericho." It is material self-preservation and not God that is laid down for us as the fundamental principle underlying the regulations of the moral and social orders. The very oughtness of moral acts has no more lofty motive than this. Such a position is, of course, impossible for Catholics.

[2] Sine Deo cognito.

IV.

The scholastics recognized the principle of self-preservation, "omne ens quaerit suum esse," but they were far from ending their investigations there. They clearly perceived that any obligations arising solely from such a basis would be purely relative and by no means moral. They delved deeply, not indeed to lay the foundations of the moral structure, but to lay bare the rock on which it was already built. The edifice had been long in existence. It was their heritage, but they did not accept it without testing its solidity.

Going back as do the Modernists merely to the interior and purely subjective dictates of reason, they could get no firm footing for the moral order. The minds of all were, indeed, clamoring for the doing of good and the shunning of evil. Self-preservation was the instinct behind much of this, yet that was not enough to make the good to be done or the evil to be avoided moral or immoral in quality. Reviewing the past, they beheld at different epochs of the world's history the most flagrant indecencies paraded in the open as virtue by men who seemed to be sincere.

Theft had been regarded as a convenient accomplishment. Prostitution had passed often as an act of divine worship. Homicide and suicide had not only been tolerated, but had been warmly approved under given conditions. Was there an absolute and fixed moral order or was there not? If there was, it would have to get its sanction from a cause outside itself. Intrinsically, its existence could not be proved. The beauty of virtue did not make virtue moral, for many things were beautiful that could not pass for moral. The sympathy prompting virtue, the bodily affections ensuing from its neglect, were as vain as beauty in showing its moral feature, for these were wholly accidental to it. The only cause sufficient to establish and sanction a moral standard would have to be superior to sentiment and fancy, superior to reason itself, and would have to be known in other ways than by empty speculation upon custom and practice.

The "a priori" method was the only one admissible, from the nature of the case, in exploring, establishing, or analyzing the origins of morality. That much granted, the problem resolved itself into this: Is

there a personal God with Whom mankind enjoys vital relations? If there is, morality will follow inevitably from these relations, or from any law issuing from the divine intelligence; whereas, if there is not, there can never be the shadow of morality among men. What is called morality will then be robbed of its binding force, and be reduced,—as the Modernists actually reduce it,—to the level of an optional and arbitrary etiquette.

No claim was made upon revelation when the problem was resolved affirmatively. Faith was wholly unnecessary to prove either the existence of God, His personal character, or the reality of the providence He exercises over mankind. Reason itself, when unbiased by falsity or unclouded by vice, could go so far. But then there followed, as a necessary consequence, the existence of an eternal law to which human acts should be attuned. It was only by comparison with this law that they became endowed with moral value. Whatever was in accordance with the eternal law was moral; whatever was contrary to it was immoral. Reason was appealed to as a norm of moral action only in so far as it was instructed and formed after this di-

vine ideal. Then only might it be a safe guide.

Needless to say, none but morality of this sort could be stable, true, and real. The natural law, contained in but not originating with the Decalogue, at once became binding. It had been written by the Almighty on the fleshy tablets of the heart long ages before the Sinaitic tables had been carved. Without this law, reason might dictate rules of RIGHT human conduct, but not rules of MORAL conduct. With this law it might develop a moral code as time went on and its perception grew keener. This it actually did, and thereby made man the noble creature he now is.

V.

Such is the doctrine held up to scorn and mockery by our contemporaries. It is not, they say, what it pretends to be, for "the notion that there is anything fundamentally correct implies the existence of a standard outside and above usage, and no such standard exists." Why does it not exist? Because, they insist, God does not exist, or, if He does, He takes no care about us.

But we know that God does exist. Apart

from the more than convincing proofs of philosophy, our faith, which is the guardian of morality, tells us it is in Him "we live, move, and have our being." "He made us and not we ourselves." He preserves us and keeps aglow the spark of life still burning in our breasts. Religion binds us to Him, and by its brightness illumines the path along which we tread. Religion is the safeguard of morality, and although morality is independent of religion by nature, still it cannot long subsist without it in truth.

The Reformation cry was: "Be spiritual, adore God in spirit and in truth." The Church replied: "In visible action, too, for faith or spiritual worship without works is dead." The Reformers would not listen. To-day their children show how much at fault they were. Religion has been sacrificed and morality is at low ebb. Upon easy change of religion (see prop. 2) ensues easy change of wives (prop. 8), and then a tide of crime is let loose upon the world (see prop. 6-10). Men learn to economize in offspring, for on the broad stairways open between the social levels, children turn out to be encumbrances. It is no longer celibacy that

is to blame. It is Humanitarianism dehumanized!

Is it any wonder that our present Pontiff grew alarmed at the lowering clouds of Modernistic night? Realizing that his first and foremost duty was the sanctification of souls and the averting of spiritual harm, he braved, by salutary decrees, the calumnies and ridicule of perishing unbelievers in order to rescue from exterior darkness the souls confided to his care. Too clearly did he foresee that the errors of philosophy to-day would be the sins of the philosophers to-morrow, and he could not bring himself to believe that he would be faithful to his trust were he to allow those errors to pass unnoticed.

What are we Catholics doing in face of this propaganda of evil? Are we spreading the light as eagerly and effectively as our enemies are diffusing darkness? If humanitarian philosophers and scientists are perverting popular ideas through the magazines and public lectures, pseudo-science, the stage, the novel, and the daily newspapers, their pernicious activities can only be counteracted by Catholic philosophers and scientists, equally well trained, who will work through these same channels and so reach the popular mind. Now

if university training imparts a certain prestige to the propagators of falsehood, it, too, will give a like prestige to the disseminators of truth. For that reason it has been asked why Catholics do not try to secure chairs in State or other universities, why they do not seek for the endowment of Catholic universities side by side with those which profess to be non-denominational, but which are rather, in teaching and in spirit, adverse and anti-Catholic? Both of these systems are being carried out successfully in certain parts of Europe. But to come nearer home, why is not the Catholic University of America patronized and supported as it so richly deserves? There is a manifest and lamentable indifference on the part of Catholics, a lack of sympathy and confidence in the noble purpose and work of the University. They seem not to realize that they are thus neglecting their highest spiritual and intellectual interests and those of their children. They apparently ignore the self-imposing and important truth that only Catholic institutions of learning can counteract the pernicious effects that inevitably follow from the so-called higher training given in non-Catholic colleges and universities.

HISTORY OF THE DOGMA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception has many phases. At the outset it bears the appearance of a "modern" doctrine, since it has but recently been defined. For that reason it seems to imperil the oneness and infallibility of the Church which defined it.

It is sufficiently manifest that if any teaching body originate an article of belief, change substantially an accepted article, or abolish an old one, it thereupon forfeits its title to unity of doctrine. Furthermore, since truth is one and unchangeable at all times, such a body proves itself fallible, defective, and consequently without authority. It may not, therefore, claim for itself divine institution. Of such an establishment Christ did not make Himself the author when He empowered and bade His apostles to "teach all nations," promising that He would remain with them "all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) "The Son

of God, Jesus Christ . . . was not, ' It is ' and ' It is not ' but ' It is,' was in Him." (2 Cor. i. 19.) If, then, the Immaculate Conception is an entirely new dogma or wholly a nineteenth century invention, the authority of the Catholic Church is impeached, and men must look elsewhere for the Rock of Salvation according to the injunction of St. Paul: " though we or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." (Gal. i. 8.)

Another interesting feature of the Immaculate Conception is that it is not contained expressly in Sacred Scripture. To enhance this difficulty—for it is a grievous difficulty in the way of its acceptance by non-Catholics—the law of original sin is set down in such clear, forceful terms by St. Paul as to warrant the denial of any exception to it, in one who chooses to accept the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith. Our knowledge of this mystery assumes that tradition must go hand in hand with the sacred writings, and that the Catholic Church is the guardian and interpreter of both.

We need not linger on these preliminaries. A brief history of the dogma will

reveal that it is by no means an invention, but rather an ancient teaching coeval with the Church, and in perfect harmony with other apostolic traditions.

II.

For several centuries the Immaculate Conception, as an object of belief, was in what might properly be styled an embryonic state; that is to say, it was implied in other revealed truths which were openly professed.

It ought not to be a source of wonderment that this teaching, which redounds so much to the glory of Mary, was not explicitly believed from the beginning. This fact serves only to illustrate that God, Who had designed His Church for the sanctification and eternal welfare of men, chose to make it in some degree like human institutions. It was, indeed, never to exceed the margins of truth and righteousness, yet it was to pass through certain evolutions and developments of teaching, legislation and disciplinary enactments to a more perfect state. Many dogmas were held explicitly in the Church's infancy, such as the divinity of Christ, the necessity of baptism, the Real Presence of our

Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and the like, but others were not so well understood, and these Christ deposited with His Church to be expounded and made clear by her in future ages. To this class of truths belongs the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

The representatives and exponents of the Church's beliefs in early ages were the Apologists and Fathers. That their idea of Mary was that of a sinless creature, is evinced from their unanimity in pronouncing her "most innocent, most pure, inviolate, undefiled, immaculate, the daughter of life, the new and sacred leaven made perfect unto God." So deep was St. Augustine's appreciation of Mary's sanctity that he declared in his work "On Nature and Grace" that he wished never to mention her in connection with sin. Sts. Ephrem and Ambrose, contemporaries of St. Augustine, were equally as pointed. "In thee, O Lord," exclaimed the former, "there is no stain, and thy mother is without spot," while the latter writes: "The Virgin Mary was not defiled by any blemish of sin." (Comm. Ps. cxviii.) Such epithets and eulogies were meaningless, did they not signify freedom from origi-

nal not less than from actual sin. However, they do not express clearly at what moment the freedom began.

It was particularly on the feasts of the Nativity and Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin that the Fathers first extolled the august privilege of her Conception, and proclaimed loudly and unmistakably that never for a moment was the Holy Spirit absent from her soul. Thus was the way paved towards the institution of the feast of the Conception which inaugurated the second period in the history of the dogma.

III.

Andrew of Crete chronicled the celebration of this festival in the Greek Church as early as the year 675. The truthfulness of this annal is borne out by compilations of sermons still extant, which were composed for the occasion during the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries. From Greece the devotion made headway throughout Sicily and thence to Naples. In the latter place a marble tablet of the ninth century still commemorates the keeping of the feast on December 9.

It is recorded that the festival was observed at Rome in the Oriental monastery

of S. Saba, near the Aventine Hill, early in the twelfth century. At that time (1115), a nephew of St. Anselm, also named Anselm, was abbot. He fostered piously the cult which flourished under his rule and, when he was afterwards transferred to the abbacy of Edmundburgh (1121), and elevated to the Episcopal See of London (1138), he labored zealously and efficiently to promote in England the devotion which he found already there established (viz., since 1110). His chief act in this regard was the institution of the feast of the Conception.

It was perhaps owing to Anselm's repeated missions to Normandy (1115 and 1119) as Apostolic Legate that the devotion took root in that country. From Normandy the pious movement passed into France, where it grew so rapidly that, by the year 1154, the entire Christian populace of the nation patronized it. It was at this juncture that St. Bernard sent his celebrated epistle to Lyons in which he severely censured the institution of the feast in that city as an "innovation." Many theologians strive to excuse this action of the Mellifluous Doctor by maintaining that its author failed to grasp the meaning of

the mystery in its proper light. They argue also that he would not have displayed such unwonted hostility if the canons concerned had procured the approval of the Holy See. However this may be, the cult spread subsequently through Germany, Spain, and the rest of Europe.

Rome manifested its proverbial tardiness in officially advocating the devotion. It made no effort to check its progress and expansion, nor did it display opposition to the observance of the festival. It was merely waiting to learn the mind of the Holy Ghost before sealing with its positive approbation a universal impulse which could not have sprung but from God.

IV.

Meanwhile the spirit of controversy was waxing warm in the schools. Whatever may have been the intention of St. Bernard in writing the epistle referred to, it is an historical fact that by it he placed a temporary damper on the growth of the devotion, and furnished its opponents with efficient weapons. His untoward influence must have been felt the more because he was otherwise so unbounded and effusive in his praises of Mary.

St. Bernard and other representative Catholic doctors of the medieval period seemed to have apprehended the law of original sin as being so stringent and universal that absolutely no one who had been endowed with existence by human progenitors, could escape its yoke. In the case of our divine Saviour alone, it appeared to them, was the curse of Eden totally suspended, or, more properly, removed, and this was by reason of his miraculous human origin as well as His divinity. Hence Blessed Albert the Great queries ("Missus est"), " Why was not at least one man (besides the Saviour) conceived without original sin?" and he answers that this would be " impossible, unless such a one were conceived of a virgin." Mary, therefore, like others needed redemption. Wherefore she was at one time, albeit for the shortest instant, offensive to her Creator. Thus reasoned the keenest minds, notably Peter Lombard and Hugh of St. Victor.

St. Anselm has been adduced both as favoring and opposing the dogma. The latter opinion is more likely. True, he claimed as befitting our Lady, a purity than which " none greater is intelligible

in a creature" ("De Conceptione Virginali"), but he did not distinctly apply these words to the first moment of her existence. He and his contemporaries fully appreciated the difficulties which surrounded them and, as they viewed the earnest and warming devotion of the faithful to the mystery which they could not explain, they paused. They were involved in deep perplexity. They failed to grasp the truth that God Who sanctifies by cleansing from the guilt of sin contracted, can also sanctify by preventing the contraction or inheritance of guilt. Consequently they saw not that redemption is necessary in a more excellent degree for the latter benefit than for the former.

St. Bonaventure approached the question more closely than any of his predecessors, yet even he failed to answer it conclusively. However, while his reason was deluged with the conflicting arguments hurled about it in the Paris University and other seats of learning, he seemed to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in the simple and pious ejaculations of the faithful. Accordingly, when he was made Minister General of his Order, he approved of the observance of a feast in

honor of the Conception throughout its rank and file. To this he might also have been moved by the commendation which the Blessed Virgin herself was said to have given to the festival, or by the revelation made to Helsinus, an English Abbot, about the year 1066.

The mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, as expressed in his works, has given rise to prolonged and animated controversy. The voluminous commentaries written in the Saint's defense would very likely have been diminished by more than half if in a single passage he had stated unequivocally that the most holy Mother of God had been conceived immaculate; but neither this assertion nor any equivalent of it proceeded from his pen.

The scholar who considers St. Thomas in his peculiar medieval environment is drawn to compare his writings with those of his master, Blessed Albert the Great and of Peter Lombard. On yielding to the attraction, he will find it hard to convince himself that the Angelic Doctor had not imbibed their views. In this, as in other matters, St. Thomas speaks with greater lucidity than many of his commentators. There is no doubt that for him the Blessed

Virgin was sanctified in the womb, as were the prophet Jeremias and St. John the Baptist. The precise moment of the prodigy escaped him, but it was *after* the infusion of the rational soul, and *not before*. Confronted by the feast of the Conception, which evidently presupposed a more definite belief, he maintained that it was "tolerated" by the Church, but not approved. In fact, he argues that Mary's sanctification could not have occurred,—as we today believe,—at the very instant of conception, for then, Mary would not have needed redemption. Christ died for her, as well as for all men—so it is revealed—she must, therefore, have incurred *the stain* of original sin at least for a short interval.

This line of reasoning is developed at length in the third part of the Summa Theologica, question XXVII, and it harmonizes so perfectly with the express and pointed denial of the Immaculate Conception in the Saint's commentaries on the third Book of the Sentences that the verdict—at least of the present writer—must be far different from what he would desire.

In treating of the miraculous sanctification of Jeremias and St. John the Bap-

tist, St. Thomas deems it no irreverence to quote St. Augustine's doubts as to its reality (*ibid.*, XXVII, II), and then discard them uncompromisingly because they are obviously at variance with the Inspired Word. Similarly would he to-day, if he could but speak to us from on high, submit to have the obvious sense of his own words weighed in the balance with the Church's infallible decisions.

Cardinal Cajetan de Vio, the recognized leader among the expositors of St. Thomas, whose commentaries are now reappearing with Pontifical approval in the scholarly "Leonine Edition," was so far from believing the Angel of the Schools a supporter of the Immaculate Conception that he styled belief in the mystery itself a sheer "delirium" affecting pious souls. Of course, Cajetan was mistaken in this last assertion. Like St. Jerome, he said many things he would have preferred to leave unsaid, could he have foreseen their effect on future ages. But there are spots, even on the sun—big spots, too, because the sun is vast—yet the sun is so brilliant that they cannot be detected with the naked eye.

Thus it is with master-minds; thus with

the saints. St. Thomas Aquinas has deserved so highly of the Church and science that his glory will increase with the ages, like that of St. Augustine; and, just as St. Augustine enjoys an honor which causes many of his admirers to forget he wrote a book of Retractions before his death, so will St. Thomas ever merit a meed of highest praise for the immeasurable good he did, and freedom from human censure for not having been elected by God a prophet. The DEFINED dogma of original sin seemed to him to be jeopardized by the apparently contrary and UNDEFINED belief in the Immaculate Conception. They who try to represent the Saint as thinking otherwise are in reality robbing him of the very conservatism which they prize so much in themselves.

It was reserved for Duns Scotus (1265[?]-1308[?]) to bring order out of confusion. He was the first to reconcile the systems of the schools with the effervescent devotion of the populace. This erudite Franciscan maintained that Mary, although naturally fated to incur the guilt of original sin, was by the special intervention of Divine Providence, preserved intact. This unspottedness was

secured to her, not before her soul had been infused into her body, nor even a moment afterwards, as many had ventured, but at the very instant of her animation or conception. With such consummate skill, deep penetration, and nice discernment did Scotus defend his thesis, that it was thereupon incorporated into the creed of the University. Thenceforth no one was admitted to the degree of Master at Paris, who did not bind himself by oath to defend the Immaculate Conception until death. Scotus, as a reward, was thrice adorned with the title of "Subtle Doctor," viz., by the universities of Paris and Cologne, which were the leading strongholds of Catholic learning in Europe, and by the reigning Supreme Pontiff. These last data are given us by Cavellus (14th century), whose authority as to these particulars all do not accept. At any rate, the title of "Subtle Doctor" has clung to Scotus, as has also that of "Herald of the Immaculate Conception."

V.

It is needless to say that continued discussions in the schools called forth several acts of the Holy See, and it is from these

acts that the official attitude of the Church is to be learned.

The Council of Basle (15th century) seems to have comprehended the dogma as we now understand it, but it lacked the authority to define it. Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484), approved of an office of the Immaculate Conception in which the victory of Scotus is commemorated. He also enriched the pious observance of the feast with indulgences, and rebuked all opponents of the dogma. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) renewed and confirmed the last-named action of Sixtus and, after having explained the Church's tenets regarding the racial sin, it declared that " it was not its intention to embrace the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God" in its decree. (Sess. v, 5.) Pope St. Pius V (1566-1572) inserted the feast in the Roman calendar and breviary, although he suppressed the word " Immaculate " from the name of the festival and prescribed the office of the Nativity B. V. M. for its celebration. St. Pius also condemned Michael Baius for teaching that "no one except Christ was free from original sin," and that " the Blessed Virgin died on account of sin contracted from

Adam." (Prop. 73.) He likewise silenced popular controversy over the subject. Paul V (1605-1621) forbade the doctrine to be publicly impugned, and Gregory XV (1621-1623), Paul's successor, extended this prohibition to private discussions. The latter Pontiff, however, exempted THE FRIARS PREACHERS from this restriction. (Brief, "Eximii".) Towards the middle of the 17th century Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667) expounded the dogma in almost the same phraseology as that used by Pius IX in his famous definition. Yet Alexander refrained from issuing a definition and contented himself with renewing the Constitutions of Sixtus IV. It was Pope Clement IX (1700-1721) who first ordered the feast of the Conception to be kept throughout the universal Church. It is pertinent to note that Pius VII granted the Franciscans a special preface for the Mass of the feast in the year 1806, which preface was later conceded to the archdiocese of Seville (1834), to the Dominican Order (1843), and finally to the rest of the Latin Church. The invocation, " Queen conceived without original sin," was inserted in the Litany of Loretto in 1839 by Gregory XVI.

Thus, however impetuous the disputants in the schools may have become, the Church herself viewed the doctrine calmly and deliberately. It never once censured either the teaching or any of its defenders. On the contrary, it gradually laid strictures on its opponents as a class, and for several centuries assisted notably in diffusing a knowledge of the mystery and in fostering devotion towards it. Borrowing the words of Pope Pius IX: "The Church of Rome has held nothing dearer than the declaration, defence, furtherance, and upholding of the Immaculate Conception in the most persuasive terms."

VI.

In this manner the second period was drawing to a close. The time was getting ripe for a definition. The Immaculate Conception had not as yet been made an article of faith. It was somewhat like the mystery of the Assumption B. V. M. in our day. Men might not deny it with impunity, yet they might do so and escape the brand of "heretic." Few there were, however, who displayed strong aversion for the doctrine. Some found greater difficulties in it than others, but all were ready to bow their

heads in reverent submission as soon as Peter would speak. The vast majority were loudly clamoring for a decision.

These circumstances were, so to speak, peculiarly distinctive of the Immaculate Conception. Other doctrines had been defined in the Church at various times, but only on account of heresies that had arisen concerning them. Relative to this dogma there was no heresy, but merely a mistiness which obscured the truth to a few, but which awaited only the bright and radiant light of the Vatican to dispel it.

Then began the third stage in the dogma's history. After repeated and untiring solicitations on the part of Christian kings and rulers, the hierarchy, and the faithful at large, and after having invoked the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit by fasting and both public and private prayers, Pope Pius IX saw fit to promulgate on December 10, 1854, the following decree:

"To the honor of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the grace and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith, and the increase of the Christian religion, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the

Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and Our Own, We declare, pronounce, and define that the teaching which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary was by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the human race, preserved free from every taint of original sin, at the first moment of her Conception, has been revealed by God, and is therefore strongly and constantly to be believed by all the faithful." (Bull, "Ineffabilis.")

The cause was finished. Since that proclamation the course of Catholics has been clear. Controversy has ceased and the old discussions, having lost all living import, form little more than materials for history. In that domain they are to stand forever as monuments to the imbecility of unaided human reason in fathoming "the deep things of God."

In accordance with the teaching of Holy Church, all Catholics now believe and maintain unflinchingly that our Blessed Mother was never for an instant under the dominion of Satan. Never was her soul tarnished with original guilt. At the first moment of its creation it was made the repository and temple of the Holy Ghost.

It was, indeed, infused into a body subject to the penalties of sin, to sorrow, infirmity, suffering and death, but it had been timely rescued from the slightest moral deformity and had been made to outshine the angels in the brilliancy of its purity.

This ennoblement of Mary was due to her Divine Son's future merits. Christ was to redeem mankind, and Mary was to be His helper, His co-operatrix, His Mother. She then should be the first to experience the kindly influence of His deserts. She, who would naturally have been a doomed and helpless daughter of Eve, should first bask in the brightness of His vivifying rays. Jesus, therefore, Who was the Sun of Justice, illumined Mary, the Mirror of Justice, from the first moment of her existence.

This benefit was a peculiar prerogative, "a singular grace and privilege." In its bestowal, our heavenly Father deigned to regard the soul of His beloved Spouse as already purchased by the Precious Blood of His Son, notwithstanding the fact that that Blood had not as yet been shed.

Such is the dogma which all Catholics proudly and openly profess, not on account of its plausibility or intrinsic rea-

sons, but because it "has been revealed by God." Here it must be called to mind that the revelation was not simultaneous with the definition, as some non-Catholics understand the Church to teach. It was made two decades of centuries ago. It was not always so clear and distinct as other revelations, yet it was confided to an unerring Church which was ultimately to identify it and extricate it from the mass of deposited dogma.

VII.

The difficulties advanced at the beginning of this paper must ere now have vanished from the minds of intelligent readers. The Catholic Church in defining the Immaculate Conception, the infallibility of the Pope, transubstantiation, or any other dogma, does not originate, change, or reject an article of faith, or reform its code of truth. It merely gives evidence of its sound and healthful vitality in discerning under divine guidance what has already been revealed, and what has not. Just as its Divine Founder, although He knew all things from the beginning, "advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men," (Luke ii. 52), so the Church, al-

though possessed of all its dogmas at the date of its birth, passes through the periods of infancy, youth, and manhood, showing at each stage new signs of growth, development and independence, by the evolution and confirmation of its dogmas not less than those of its legislation.

Nor should it be alleged with reference to the Immaculate Conception, that tradition, to which appeal is made, is in conflict with Sacred Scripture, since St. Paul extends the ban of sin to all men, whereas tradition exempts the Blessed Virgin. St. Paul merely utters a positive law which depends wholly upon the will of God for its execution. God can, therefore, if He chooses, grant dispensations from such a law without abolishing it. It is to the actual concession of a dispensation or privilege of this kind that tradition attests. From this it is obvious that the Scriptures speak truthfully and tradition speaks truthfully. The latter supplements but does not contradict the former.

Yet the Bible is not wholly silent about our Lady's prerogative. In the book of Genesis (iii. 15), we find a prediction of it in those " enmities " which God was to place between the woman and the serpent,

and in the crushing of the serpent's head. Again, the Archangel's address to Mary, declaring that she was "full of grace" (Luke i. 28), is pertinent, but these texts are not demonstrative and are fully understood only when viewed in the light of the definition.

Not a few Catholics survive who are able to recall the universal joy which followed upon the solemn proclamation of the Immaculate Conception. Fain do we join with these in congratulating our Blessed Mother who now beams with undimmed, unwonted splendor. Mary's internal happiness, it is true, has not been increased, but her external glory has been enhanced. Men know her better and love her more. "Hail full of grace," they jubilantly salute her—"full," with a plentitude of benediction which their minds cannot grasp. Hail, Conqueror of Satan and Morning Star! Hail, Tower of David in which sinners take refuge! Hail, Restorer of our liberties and our inheritance, our Heavenly Queen!

"Queen, conceived without original sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

AMBITION.

In a green and shaded woodland
  Crystal doth a streamlet flow.
None among God's works more guileless,
  None the soul doth ravish so.
Waters clearer, purer, sweeter
  Ne'er more cheerily did go.
'Tis the voice of God who calls them,
  Fair allegiance Him they show.

Happy is the unnamed brooklet
  As it murmurs soft and low,
Kissing its enchanting borders,
  Blithesome as the zephyrs blow.
Health, refreshment, joy abundant,
  Glad it doth on all bestow
Who beside it, worn or weary,
  Rest from earth's toils, cares, and woe.

Heaven's wingèd fondlings gaily
  Chirping, in its ripples play.
Forest's timid bosom darlings
  Frolic near it day by day.
Earth-bedecking flow'rs and mosses
  Mirrored, joy along its way.
Sun and moon and starry courses
  Peep and hear its mystic lay.

Would that thus throughout the ages
Humble, lowly, it might stay,
Wholesome, innocent, and guileless,
Leading old and young to pray!
But a dream of glory lures it
And beneath ambition's sway,
Fame and honor rare it covets,—
Swift it runs and speeds the day.

In its merry, dancing progress
Younger streamlets haste to greet
One, of them so close a likeness,
Charmed they smile where'er they meet.
Straight each fresher stream is welcomed,
Then caressed, and finds it sweet
To new love to be thus wedded,—
Caught in fortune's fair deceit.

Thus, the modest brook expanding,
Swelling onwards broad and deep,
Proud, its moth'ring banks abandons,
They no more safe guard can keep
O'er its dizzy, dashing flurries,
Truly, it doth make them weep.
Soft they stoop their moistened eyelids—
Quick it drowns them. Death's their sleep.

Once beyond the sombre woodland,
With th' impris'ning banks downtrod,
Liberty becks back restriction,
Wanton license rules as God.
Brook no more: a river daring
Now in haughtiness doth nod
When adventurer salutes it
Or the weary near it plod.

Proud, the tossing waters wander,
Spread they wide across the plain.
Man must see them. All must know them,
Now they have achieved a name.
Freshets fierce and floods they sow there
Helped by mountains oft of rain
Crashing on their turgid bosom,
Rife with violent acclaim.

Ever heaving, roaring, rolling,—
Deaf'ning mass of thunderpeals!
Trees uprooted, homes demolished,—
Cruel stream! No sting it feels.
Self-reproach is dead within it,
And no bosom-stream reveals
What keen anguish it doth suffer
As in whirlpools deep it reels.

"On to glory, bright fame's luster,—
Hail! majestic arches, hail!

I, the River Grand, salute you,
  Fall! Make way! 'Tis I'll prevail!
None my force hath yet defeated.
  Leaflike shook the wind-fraught sail,
E'en the giant oak did shudder,
  As I merged them in my trail."

"Now entomb'd they lie and, lusty,
  I do bleed them in my breast.
Covet you to share their sorrows?
  Then withstand me at your best!
Weaker foe than I accosted
  Victim plumed with nobler crest—
Passing, he did smite and make him
  Rue the day he dreamt of rest."

Crashed the bridge's span of arches
  Reedlike, caught in hostile grasp.
Age and beauty had renowned them
  Nor had gruesome wintry blast
Distanced fair and shrewd observers
  Who had flocked in numbers vast,
Art and grandeur rare to witness
  In them. Such was ne'er surpassed.

Dazed and ruined now the arches
  Woe and dire affliction drink.
Bitter is their cup of sorrow—
  Theirs no more the shores to link,

Passage high, and safe, and steady,
Sure to give from brink to brink.
Doomed and helpless, they lament it,
Sad, they shriek, and shrieking sink.

Thus the River Grand doth triumph.
Conq'ring foe he nowhere fears.
Valiant, potent, hardened, heartless,
Never doth he list to tears.
Throbbing breast he stifles, crushes,
Naught of frailer kind appears
Apt to soften his ambition.
Iron-clad, he flouts and jeers.

Seething, surging, tearing onwards—
Sure, no hardship is too great.
Working ruin and destruction,—
Mostly thus doth fame create.
What if forest's stream hath perish'd,
Innocence hath lost, to sate
Fiercest greed of wildest passion!
Is not that the law of fate?

Virtue ne'er exists with greatness
Sought in wild ambition's train.
Well the River Grand doth know it—
Virtue, then, and grace he fain
Spurns with bitterest disapproval.
Only if he were insane,

Could he heartily embrace them.
  Now, too low, he'd stoop from fame!

Comes at length the fatal moment
  When the river's life doth wane,
Desolation it hath nurtured,—
  Quick and wild in frenzied strain,
Now the monster-child doth gripe it.
  Rav'ning yawns the mighty main
Prey so rich to grind and swallow,—
  Die, ambition, with thy name!

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